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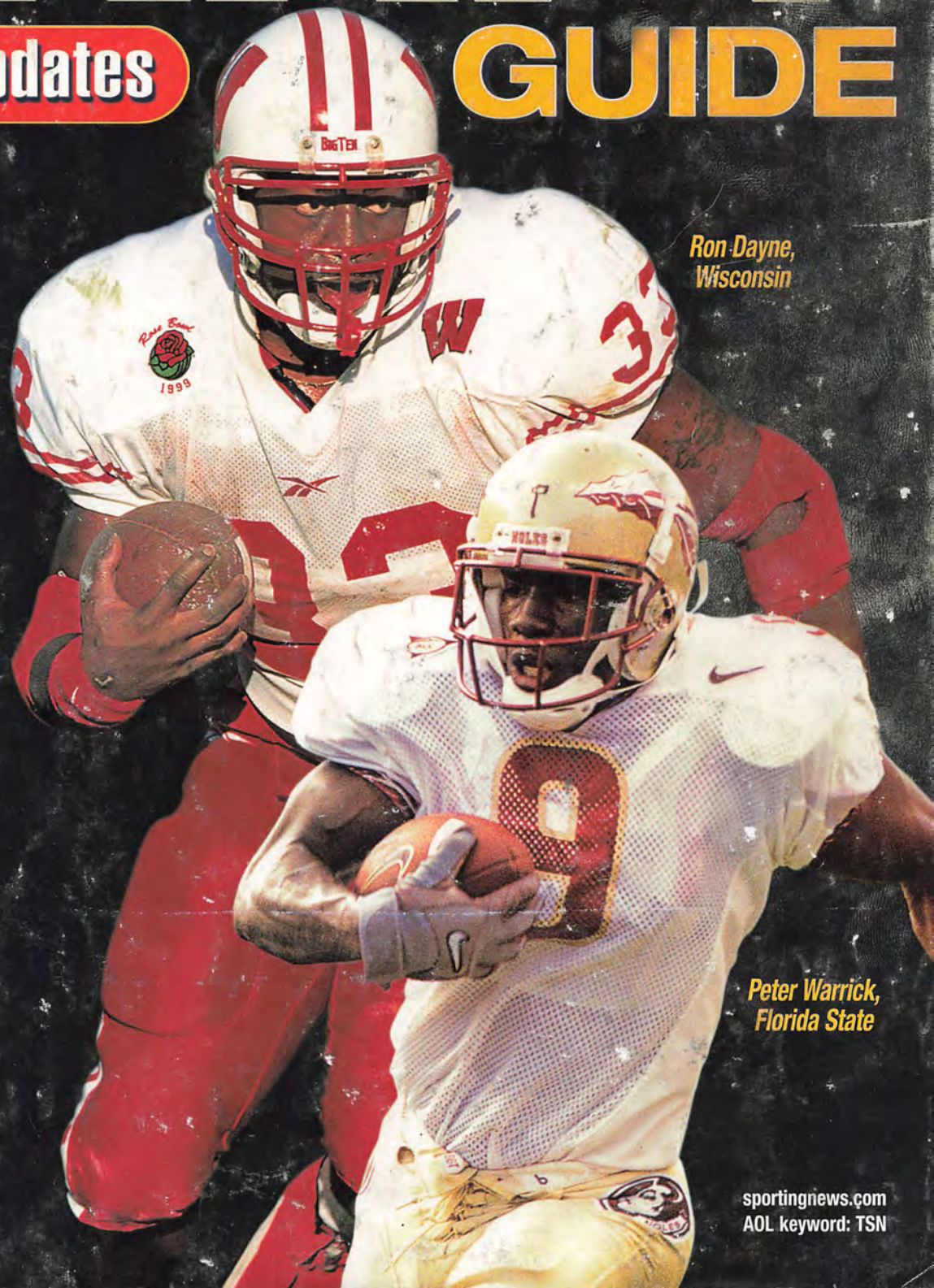

Ron Dayne, Wisconsin

Peter Warrick, Florida State

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Letter from the Managing Editor

First of all, I'd like to say "thank you" to those who are buying the *Draft Guide* for the second time. That means you're among the many thousands of people who bought our first edition a year ago. Interest in the NFL draft is enormous, and we were certain fans would respond to an insightful, sharp-looking, thorough—and inexpensive—preview. You did, and we're grateful.

We also figured you'd tell us what we should do differently the second time around, and you did that, too. The 1999 *Draft Guide* prompted more reader response than any other yearbook we've done in my 16 years at *The Sporting News*, and though the vast majority of it was complimentary, you did make some valuable suggestions for improvement, many of which are addressed in this issue:

- More player scouting reports. We rated the top draft prospects a year ago, but you wanted analyses of more late-round prospects. We break down 280 players this year—almost a 50 percent increase.
- Longer player scouting reports. We go particularly deep on players projected to go in the first or second round.
- Greater emphasis on team needs in the team reports.
- Stacking the board. Instead of trying to do a seven-round mock draft—which is difficult when our February 29 deadline precedes the awarding of compensatory picks—we decided to follow our first-round mock draft with a draft board. We "stack" the board to show the round in which each player should be taken, based solely on his value, not team needs or the overall strength or weakness of the position, either of which can raise or lower a player's ultimate draft spot. We also weave in our rankings of the top prospects, regardless of position.

Gary Horton of The War Room

JIM TUTEN FOR TSN

When I say "we" stack the board, I have to be honest: The War Room does it. That's something we didn't change—our team of expert draft analysts. The folks at The War Room break down film and interview coaches and scouts all year. We love our pro and college football here at *The Sporting News*, but The War Room takes football expertise to a new level. As was the case a year ago, its experts wrote our player evaluations, team reports and five-year report cards. That's most of the book.

The War Room was launched three years ago by Gary Horton, a former NFL scout (10 years) and college coach (10 years). He has spent his entire working life evaluating football players, and now he is assisted by an able team of young talent evaluators whom he has molded in his own image: Jim Nagy, Todd McShay and Peter Sousa. Want to know why Ahmed Plummer ranks a notch above Dwayne Goodrich? These guys will give you a 10-minute discourse.

We're confident you'll like the 2000 *Draft Guide*. It's loaded with information that you'll find useful not only before the draft, but also after it, when you're trying to analyze your favorite team's 2000 rookie class or when some anonymous practice-squad guy is activated in October. Keep this around all season.

And don't hesitate to let me know what you'd like to see improved in our third edition. Drop me a line at 10176 Corporate Square Dr., Suite 200, St. Louis, MO 63132 or e-mail me at mnahrstedt@sportingnews.com.

Finally, be sure to read the latest on the draft in *The Sporting News* weekly magazine and on our website (sportingnews.com). We're committed to previewing and covering the draft with unmatched passion and expertise. At TSN, the NFL draft reigns supreme.

Mike Nahrstedt

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Fantasy Baseball	January 11	Pro Football	July 4
Racing Preview	January 18	Fantasy Football	July 11
Baseball	February 15	Hockey	August 29
NFL Draft	March 21	Pro Basketball	September 12
College Football	June 20	College Basketball	October 3

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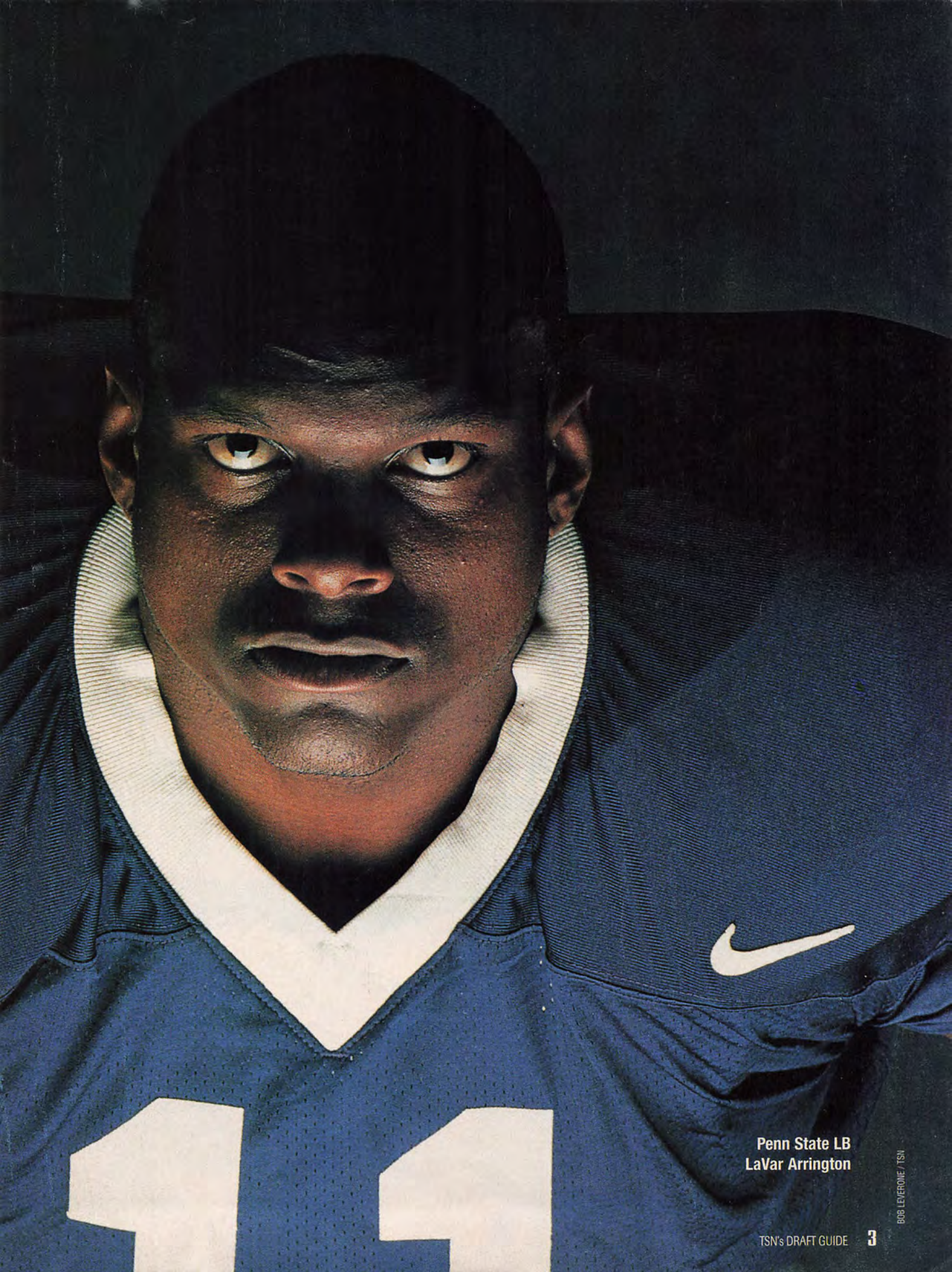
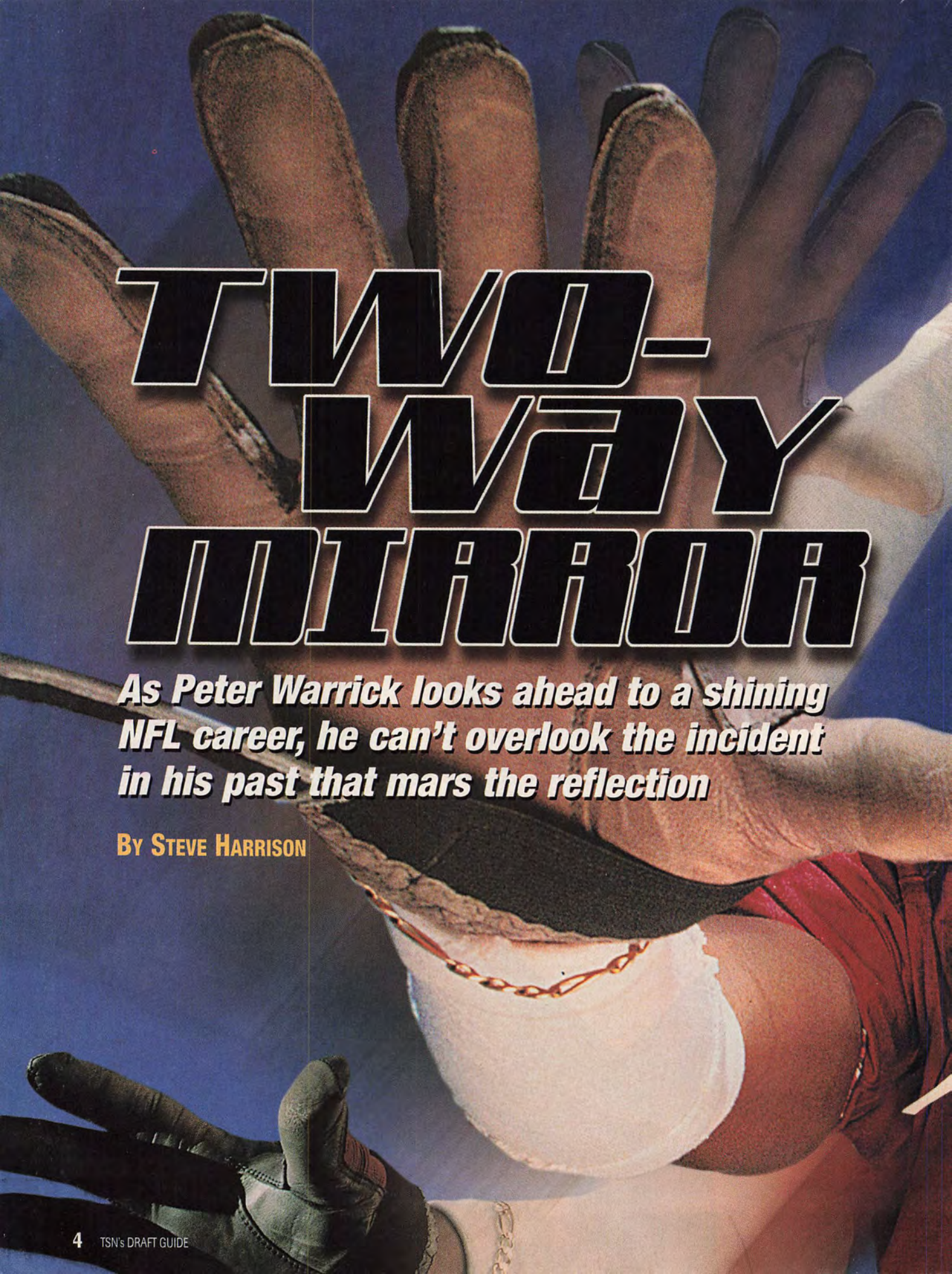


Penn State LB
LaVar Arrington

BOB LEVERONE / TSN



TWO-WAY MIRROR

As Peter Warrick looks ahead to a shining NFL career, he can't overlook the incident in his past that mars the reflection

BY STEVE HARRISON

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

TWO-WAY MIRROR

When you are rebuilding a shrunken reputation, you do it anywhere you can. Even if it's a plain-Jane Holiday Inn outside New Haven, Conn., where it has been snowing since the invention of the forward pass. And so Peter Lashawn Warrick has come here to do what most fallen heroes often do: Take your lumps and start over.

Warrick is standing in a hallway of the hotel, a Nokia phone in his ear. He's wearing blue warmups, black Air Jordans and a black baseball cap sideways.

He also is wearing jewelry. Lots of jewelry. Warrick was a political science major at Florida State, but it looks as if he might have minored in Tiffany's—or perhaps QVC. Warrick has two fake diamond earrings the size of pebbles. A fake gold bracelet. And a diamond cross he wears as a necklace.

Warrick also is wearing his Fiesta Bowl ring from the 1998 season. He's waiting for his new Sugar Bowl ring, which will celebrate not only a national championship, but also one of college football's all-time great individual performances. In Florida State's 46-29 victory over Virginia Tech, Warrick had six catches for 163 yards and two touchdowns. He also caught a two-point conversion pass and returned a punt 59 yards for a touchdown.

"I won't need this anymore soon," Warrick says, grinning and pointing to his old ring. "I ought to take it and sling it."

Since the Sugar Bowl, Warrick has hit the banquet circuit, worked out in Tampa and Phoenix in preparation for the NFL draft, and spent time with his 3-year-old daughter, A'Lyric, who lives in Tampa with her mother. It's a heady time: The Browns likely will make him the No. 1 pick in the draft, where he will form a potent passing game with quarterback Tim Couch and wide receiver Kevin Johnson.

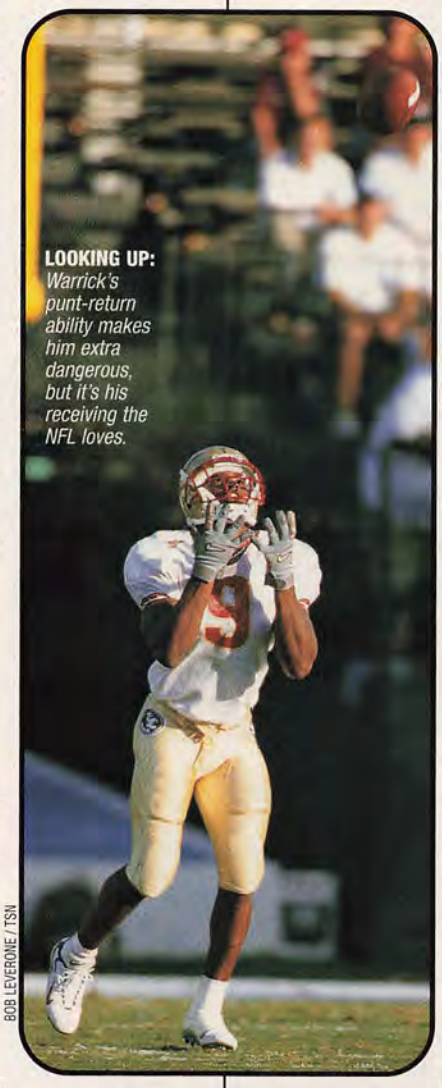
But in early February, Warrick is still looking in the rear-view mirror. He is in New Haven for the Walter Camp awards, a historic, if not overly prestigious, ceremony that honors one of college football's pioneers. Though Warrick attended the Walter Camp affair last year, it's possible he wouldn't have returned, except that he wasn't invited to New York City for the Heisman Trophy ceremony, and he didn't win the Biletnikoff Award, given to the nation's best wide receiver. Stanford's Troy Walters won that one.

Of course, Warrick wasn't invited to the Heisman ceremony because of the infamous Dillard's shopping spree, in which he and fellow wide receiver Laveranues Coles were arrested for buying more than $400 worth of men's designer clothing for $21.40 (a 95 percent discount). There also was his callous statement after the fact, which will go down as one of the worst public relations moves ever. "It wasn't like I shot the President," Warrick said.

As Warrick talks in his cell phone, a group of reporters assembles, wanting to speak to him.

But Warrick keeps talking. And talking. You would think it's obvious that the reporters are waiting for him, but he keeps chatting, like a 14-year-old girl. He even walks into another room and plops down in a chair, the reporters still tailing him. Finally, a handler who works for his Washington, D.C. agent asks Warrick to "take a minute."

It's a telling moment: He's truly sorry about what happened last fall, but he's also proud—and stubborn. He won't lie down for anyone—not an opponent, and certainly not members of the media.



LOOKING UP: *Warrick's punt-return ability makes him extra dangerous, but it's his receiving the NFL loves.*

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

On orders of the handler, the reporters are supposed to ask "football questions only." Which is unnecessary, really, because only moments earlier, Warrick was at ease—and relatively candid—about his moral and legal troubles last fall.

Though Warrick, 22, often states publicly he never thought about quitting the Seminoles during his two-game suspension, he actually did. It was Tuesday, October 19, the week of the Clemson game, which would turn out to be the game in which he returned. But on that day, it looked as if he would sit out another week because the state of Florida and the university still were sparring over whether Warrick would be charged with a felony or a misdemeanor (he eventually pleaded guilty to misdemeanor petty theft).

Florida State wide receivers coach Jeff Bowden says Warrick came to a meeting and said it was over. "He told us he had had enough, that he couldn't take it anymore," Bowden says. "I think he was just going to stay on campus, finish his degree and prepare for the NFL. But the guys talked him out of it as soon as he said it."

Warrick puts his hands together, and squirms some in his chair.

"I knew what I did was wrong, but I was just so tired of everyone saying bad things about me," Warrick says. "I told everyone I was quitting, and that I'd wait for the NFL. I had just gotten fed up."

When you ask Warrick about Dillard's—coaches and family call it "the incident" or "his troubles"—he will talk about "God's plan" for him and how he has put his faith in higher powers. Warrick says that without having suffered in the fall, he never would have had such a great Sugar Bowl. God rewarded him for persevering, he says.

Now, the talk of God, of sinning and redemption, does sound disingenuous at times. First, religious faith has become a popular topic among athletes, many of whom talk about walking with the Lord after having walked a path to adultery or drug abuse or battery or theft—take your pick. And second, the Dillard's debacle wasn't Warrick's first brush with the law. He was arrested two summers ago at a McDonald's restaurant in Tampa for disorderly conduct and resisting arrest without violence. The charges were later dropped.

A visit to Warrick's home in Palmetto, a small community south of St. Petersburg on Florida's Gulf Coast, shows, however, that Warrick didn't pull such talk from thin air. His mother, Joanna, and his stepfather, Charles Williams, are deeply religious; hardly a sentence is spoken without a reference to God.

"I asked him, 'Did you repent?' " says Charles Williams, who traveled with Joanna to every Florida State home game and almost every road game during Warrick's college career. "I told him he couldn't wallow in it, that he knew that everything happened for a reason."

Warrick's dad, Willie—a former high school track star—lives across the Manatee River in Bradenton. Peter doesn't have a relationship with him, though he grew up in Bradenton, living with his mother. When Peter was in high school, Joanna married Charles, a minister at

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"Best of luck to you and the staff of The War Room. I know you have put a tremendous amount of work into this project and it shows. You are providing readers with a unprecedented "inside" look at the NFL. It's a great guide for the football fan."

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TWO-WAY MIRROR

Mount Raymond Full Gospel Church in Palmetto. They moved to a small, neon-pink house off Highway 41 that also is home to Peter's younger stepbrother, Christopher, and younger stepsister, Nicole. Like most homes of America's best athletes, the Williams' home is decorated with pictures of their talented son. There also is a plaque of the Ten Commandments on the wall.

Joanna, a former social worker who now is a clerk for the Department of Children and Family Services, says Peter surprised her when he told her before the 1999 Fiesta Bowl that he was thinking about returning to Tallahassee for his senior season. "He told me before the game, 'Mama, I'm thinking about coming back,' " she says. "I told him he needed to pray, and then he said that God had told him to stay."

When asked about his early days in football, Warrick says he started playing when he was "10 or 11" and became good when he was "10 or 11." (It's the same confidence—or bravado—that spurred him in the Sugar Bowl to turn to his teammates and say: "Y'all want me to finish them off here?")

When his mother moved to Palmetto, Warrick stayed in Bradenton with an aunt so he could finish at Southeast High. He was dazzling there. He led the school to two state championships in football, the second during his senior year, when he played quarterback. He played on five Southeast state champion teams in all, the others in basketball and track.

Southeast football coach Paul Maechtle says Warrick was stunning with the football. He didn't start immediately his sophomore year, but he soon showed he was special and blossomed into a remarkable athlete. "He would run kicks back, and he just had eyes in the sides of his head," Maechtle says. "He could change directions so fast, we'd often get clipping penalties because we didn't know where he was going to go."

Maechtle says Warrick's talent was complemented by a work ethic that's rarely seen among players so good. He already was a weight-room fiend, easily bench-pressing 250 pounds. "That's pretty good for a quarterback, especially in 1993," Maechtle says.

Williams and Maechtle say Warrick had something else: an almost Michael Jordan-like desire to compete. It didn't necessarily extend to academics—Joanna says she was relieved when Warrick got his college degree last December—but if there was any sort of contest, Warrick had to win. It could have been a card game. Or pickup basketball with his stepdad. He also went all-out on the practice field.

"I used to just love watching him practice," Florida State coach Bobby Bowden says. "I would stand on my tower and watch him go at it. You would hardly ever see anyone else like him."

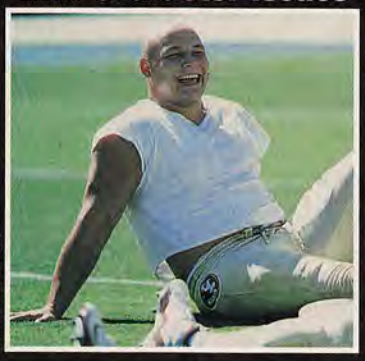
Bowden has more praise for Warrick. He says he was a shy, "lovable player," like Warrick Dunn, the former Florida State running back who is now with the Bucs. So shy, in fact, that Bowden and other coaches believe he came back to Florida State not because he was insistent on getting his degree, or because he wanted to win a national championship (and make up for his one-catch performance in the Fiesta Bowl). He came back, they say, because he was nervous about his future. "He sat in my office," Bowden recalls, "and said, 'Coach, I don't know what to do.' And I told him, 'If you don't know, then maybe you should come back for another year.' "

Though Warrick may be shy and lovable, he also is stubborn, refusing to cut ties to his Bradenton days, refusing to quit hanging around with old friends who can be bad influences.

"The part I'm worried about is that he's been so dedicated to his friends," Maechtle says. "And he's having a hard time saying no to people who aren't the best influences on his personality."

History has showed that Warrick *is* stubborn. When he was arrested after the Dillard's caper, he was with Coles, who had been in trouble before and was promptly kicked off the team. During Warrick's freshman year at Florida State, one of his best friends was Randy Moss, who later was thrown off the team for a drug offense. They still call each other. Last fall, Warrick would challenge Moss, a second-

SEBASTIAN JANIKOWSKI: Another FSU player with character issues



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

He can kick, and that may be all that matters for Sebastian Janikowski. Questions about his character, his habits, his weight—these may scare away some NFL teams, but Janikowski's strong left leg will be enough to persuade some team to take its chances.

"He's the best kicking prospect I've ever seen," says one AFC scouting director. "There are a lot of concerns about him, but someone will take him."

Sure, there are concerns about Janikowski's late-night pool hall prowess, as well as his affinity for beer and all-you-can-eat Chinese food buffets. But the concerns reached their acme when Janikowski, 21, was arrested at 3:15 a.m. January 23. Allegedly, Janikowski used hundred-dollar bills in an attempt to bribe a police officer into releasing his roommate, who was arrested a half-hour earlier for trespassing at a downtown Tallahassee bar.

Arrests are usually small deterrents when it comes to picking NFL players, but Janikowski's case is different. He is a native of Poland, and moved to Florida when he was 15. He is not a naturalized citizen, and if he is convicted, he could be sent back to Poland.

Before this latest legal trouble—Janikowski has had run-ins with Tallahassee police before, including a 1998 fight with a male Florida State cheerleader outside a bar—Janikowski likely was a second-round draft pick, with a shot at going in the first round.

But even if, as expected, Janikowski resolves the bribery charge with a plea bargain before his scheduled March 3 arraignment, his stock has dropped. Teams are afraid that if he keeps up his present lifestyle in the NFL, it could lead to another arrest, which almost surely would result in deportation.

He probably has dropped to the third round and, even if he is deported, a team might take a chance on him in the later rounds, hoping he eventually will be allowed back into the country.

The idea of drafting a deportation candidate might seem like a waste of a pick, but that shows just how high Janikowski, who passed on his senior year at Florida State to be eligible for the draft, rates on NFL draft boards. He won the Lou Groza Award as the nation's best kicker the last two years, and made 66-of-83 field goals and 126-of-129 extra points in his Seminole career. His 70-yard practice field goals are legendary.

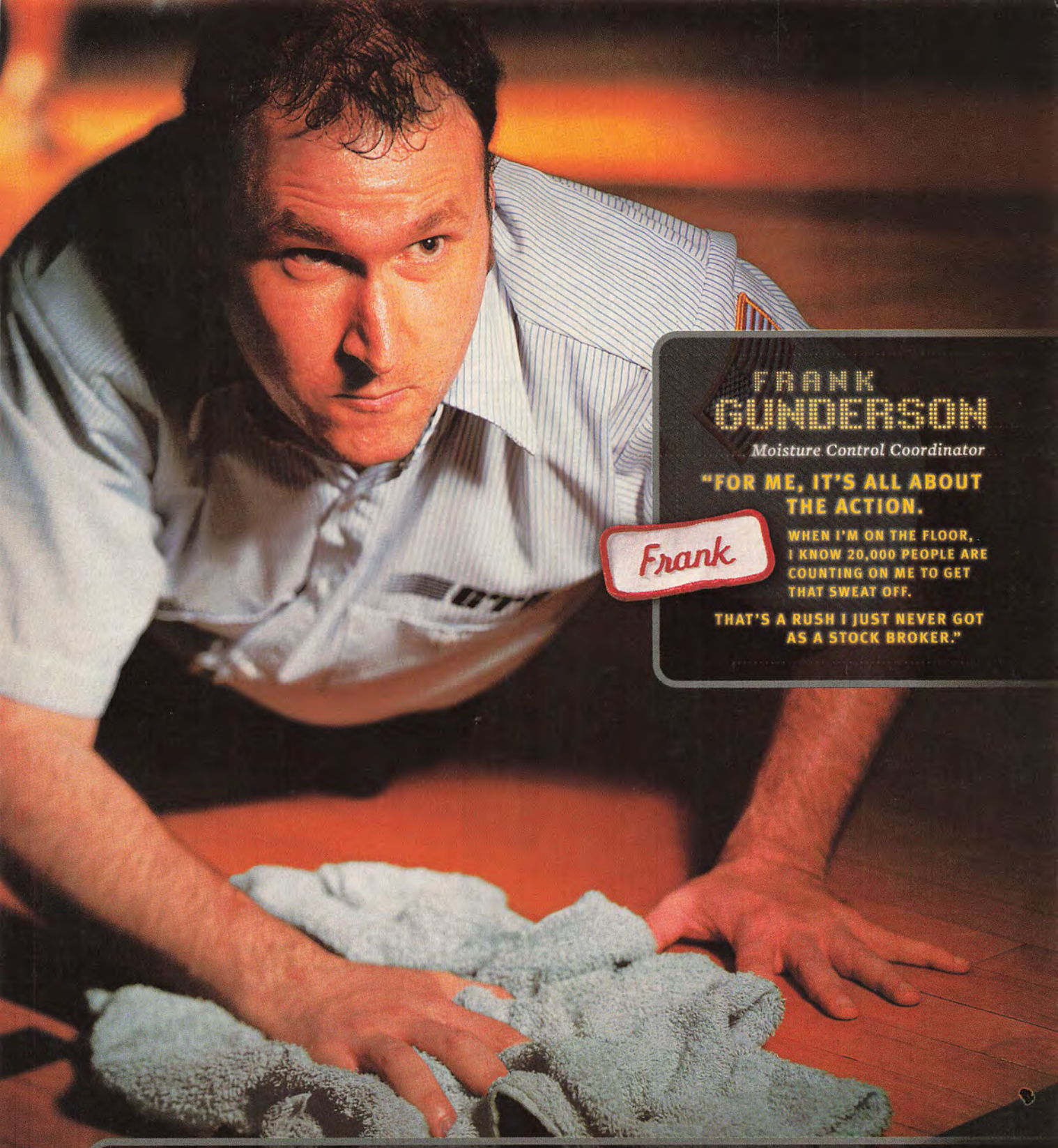
What makes Janikowski most attractive to scouts, though, is his kickoff ability. Last season, 57 of Janikowski's 83 kickoffs were touchbacks.

"We expect him to kick the ball out of the end zone on every kickoff, and we expect him to make every field goal," says Florida State quarterback Chris Weinke.

Seminoles coach Bobby Bowden recalls when Janikowski, who is 6-2, 255, had to make a tackle on a botched extra point. "We had a bad snap, and we were going to throw it," he says. "They intercepted it. The guy was going down the field and here comes old number 38, wallowing down. He hit the guy like a linebacker."

That kind of fearlessness is an asset on the field for Janikowski, but off the field, it is a negative. A costly one.

"Nobody's really sure of his status," the scouting director says. "But either way, he's dropped, and it's his own fault." —*Sean Deveney*



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TWO-WAY MIRROR

year receiver with the Vikings, to top on Sunday whatever wondrous deeds Warrick had done on Saturday. They still are good friends, and Warrick says Moss encouraged him last fall when it looked as if he wouldn't play for Florida State again.

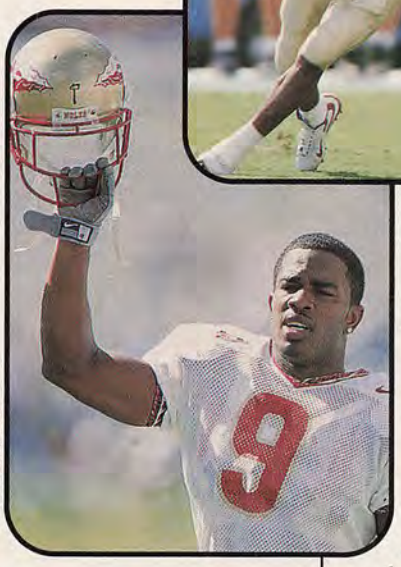
"I've tried to talk to him some when he comes home, but it's always a whirlwind," Maechtle says. "He always comes by with some of his buddies, and we never get a chance to talk."

Warrick says he's changed. When he talks about Dillard's, he puts his hands together and stares at the wall. "I've been through a lot," he says. "And it brought me to reality. Anybody can make mistakes, but the stuff I went through, I wouldn't wish that on anybody."

In the past, Warrick has said the taunts of opposing fans—the "Heistman" shirts, the chanting of his name—didn't bother him. But it did.

"Yeah, the worst part was going to away games," he says. "The fans would have all these signs, saying Peter Warrick was a jailbird, and that was really bad. And some of these people were parents, and they probably had little kids. They don't know what their kids will do one day."

BOB LEVERONE / TSN



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

'HE PLAYS FAST': *Other receivers may have more speed, but none has the big-play ability of Warrick, the likely No. 1 overall pick.*

When NFL scouts talk about Warrick, the Dillard's incident is barely mentioned. Warrick is no Randy Moss, and he's no Cecil Collins, the high-risk players of the last two drafts. If Cleveland doesn't take him No. 1, then Washington likely will take him at No. 2. In fact, some NFL types say they feel bad for the guy, that he suffered far too much for the Dillard's scam. Many see it as only slightly worse than getting free drinks from a bartender. "The kid left the store with a receipt," one scout says.

There are only two flaws for Peter Warrick, football player. The first is his size; at a little under 5-11 and 196 pounds, he is Desmond Howard-like. The second is his speed. Scouts say he runs about a 4.4 40-yard dash, which doesn't put him in the range of a Deion Sanders or a Joey Galloway. But those flaws aren't exactly weaknesses. More like chipped paint on a Rolls Royce.

Scouts love the way he runs routes. How he plays smart, knowing how to help the quarterback when he's in trouble. And how he can get open against a zone just as easily as he can beat his man off the ball.

They tend to praise four parts of his game again and again:

■ Great hands. Warrick has the unique ability to catch a pass without using his body. He just extends his hands, waits for the ball, and—stick!—it's in his paws. "Pete just sticks his hands out and it sticks, like flies on flypaper," Jeff Bowden says. "He has no fear."

At Florida State, receivers would catch passes from machines that would kick out perfect spirals. Perfect, *hard* spirals. As a fun game, they would take a step closer each time they caught one, and Warrick would invariably end up a yard or two from the machine, which is like trying to stop a Buick on the freeway.

His hands weren't always so reliable. Before his senior year, perhaps Warrick's biggest weakness was that he would follow two sensational catches by muffing an easy one.

"I just dedicated myself to concentrating," Warrick says. "I was just thinking about running with the ball before I caught it."

■ Beating the jam. In their very first practices at Florida State, receivers are taught to break the press—the tight, man-to-man coverage that is prevalent in the NFL. And Warrick has mastered getting off the line better than anyone.

"He faced the jam in practice more than in most games," says Titans director of college scouting Glen Cumbee. "He knows how to break it."

Warrick says it often was a strange adjustment going from Florida State practices to games. In practice, cornerbacks knew the tricks he liked to use to get off the line. In slow motion, Warrick explained one of his tricks. For instance, if he wanted to get to the sideline (or go left), he would throw his shoulders toward the sideline (left), and then fake the other way (right). Then he would go *back* toward the sideline (left), and use his right hand to push off.

"In college, it was so much easier in games than in practice," he says matter-of-factly.

Having super strength also helps beat a jam. Last year, Warrick did the most dips—69—of anyone on the Florida State team.

■ Constant motion. When Warrick runs a pattern, he never stops. For instance, if he runs a curl route, he'll sprint downfield as all receivers do. But when he stops and turns for the ball, he keeps coming back for it. Many players will turn, stop and wait for the ball to come to them. By always moving, Warrick keeps separation between himself and the defender.

"He's in perpetual motion," says Florida State offensive coordinator Mark Richt. "There are a number of patterns where receivers will stop. Peter plants hard, and then drives back to the quarterback."

Coaches say Warrick "attacks the ball" or "runs through the ball." Coming back to the ball makes it harder for a defender to knock it loose. It also gives him a chance to get yardage after the catch. Which brings scouts to another one of Warrick's wordly skills.

■ A demon after the catch. Warrick may not have great speed, but scouts say they have never seen anyone who can stop and start like he can.

"I don't think he has great speed," says Lions vice president of player personnel Ron Hughes. "But he plays fast. I think there is a difference—some people just aren't fast with the football. Warrick is."

The most amazing play in college football last year was Warrick's reverse against Louisiana Tech in the Seminoles' season opener. The game was tied, 7-7, in the waning seconds of the first half. Warrick took a reverse and ran right, then cut back and ran left, dodging a host of potential tacklers on his way to a 20-yard touchdown.

"His main gift is his ability to start and stop on a dime," Jeff Bowden says. "If you look at the tape, you won't see many people who have tackled him one-on-one. He's so strong for his size."

Warrick still is answering questions. He is excited about possibly playing in Cleveland, and he doesn't mind the idea of joining a losing team. "But the weather—now that's a problem," Warrick says, joking.

He is asked who he has modeled his game after, who he respects. Warrick grins, self-assured, with a pinch of swagger.

"Jerry Rice and Randy Moss," he says. "I'd like to be Jerry Moss."

Steve Harrison is a reporter for the Miami Herald.

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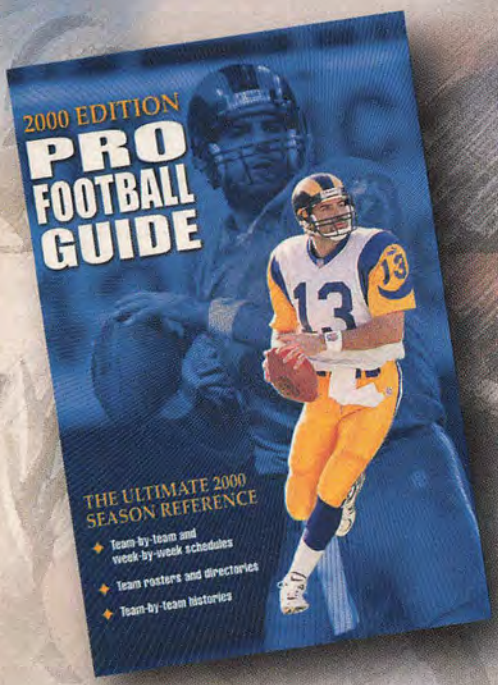

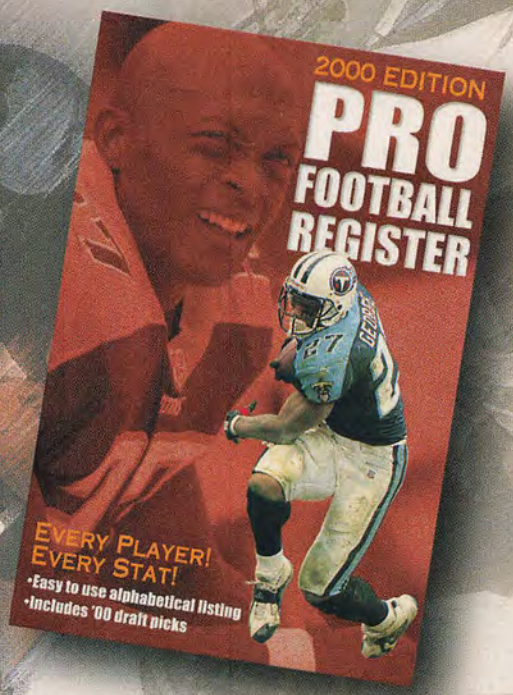

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LaVar Arrington and Courtney Brown are the two best defensive prospects available this year,

PAUL NISELY / TSN

Courtney Brown

LaVar Arrington

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

KEYSTONE

By Michael Bradley

The Baltimore Ravens are in a pretty sweet position. They hold the fifth overall pick in the 2000 draft, thanks to a trade with the Falcons, back when nobody thought Atlanta would fall as far as it did in '99. It's a good spot.

But it's not good enough. Not if the Ravens want to choose either of the two top defensive players—linebacker LaVar Arrington and defensive end Courtney Brown, both of Penn State. "They'll go in the top three," Ravens college scouting director Phil Savage says, sighing. "It's (Florida State wide receiver Peter) Warrick and those two guys. Everybody in the league has those guys in their top three."

While some may be wondering how Penn State lost three games during the 1999 season with a pair of defenders so good, Savage and his NFL brethren are not among them. All they care about is whether Arrington and Brown will become the dominant professional performers their college careers indicate they should be. As with every draft prospect since the practice began in 1936, there is a measure of doubt. With Arrington and Brown, the plot gets even thicker, thanks to their school ties and the dramatic differences in their personalities and styles of play.

Arrington is a brash, look-at-me sort, whose amazing and dramatic on-field feats belie a thoughtful person with a studious approach to the game. Brown is a quiet storm, rarely calling attention to himself with anything other than steady, productive play. "One knock on Brown, and the Penn State coaches will tell you this, is how all-out mean is he?" Savage asks. "There's no question about that with

but beyond playing together at Penn State they have little in common—on or off the field

QUANDARY

Arrington."

Few players in college football last season attracted as much attention as Arrington. He seemed omnipresent—leaping over blockers to disrupt plays; blocking last-second, game-tying, field-goal attempts; and roughing up punters. His explosion in the Alamo Bowl, in which he trashed Texas A&M for 14 tackles and forced three interceptions with savage hits against quarterback Randy McCown, was perhaps the season's most dominating individual defensive performance.

That's the Arrington package. He is a rare athlete, blessed with exceptional speed and jumping ability in a 6-3, 235-pound frame that seems cast from some classic defender's mold. "You can't teach the kind of athletic ability he has," says Tom Donahoe, the former Steelers executive who is now a part-time consultant for Miami. Some have compared Arrington to Titans rookie end Jevon Kearse, himself a big-time college playmaker with a body from the gods and the speed and hops of a springbok.

It's entirely appropriate to focus on Arrington's body and general skills. It's another to obsess on them. He bristles at those who regard him as just a runner and jumper, choosing to attribute his success to a freedom of movement within an otherwise structured scheme. Arrington considers himself an entertainer and enjoys thrilling crowds with his dramatic plays, but he insists that he is more than just an undisciplined showman who disdains the fundamentals.

"I have a knack for making big plays, but I'm a student of the game," he says. "People say I'm cheating when I jump over somebody who's going for my legs. But I know they're going to do that, because I watch a lot of film. I know it looks easy at times, but other people can't do it."

NFL talent evaluators wrestle with the Arrington question. Some don't know what position he would play in the pros. Some consider him a great outside 'backer. Others say it doesn't matter, because his NFL team will find a role for him, just as the Titans did with Kearse. Still more wonder whether he was protected within the '99 Penn State defense from having to take on big blockers on running plays, the better to freelance. "He didn't have to worry about getting off a blocker and getting to the ball much," Donahoe says. Arrington counters that since the Penn State defense is designed to funnel all action toward the middle linebacker, his excellent play must be considered even more remarkable because he had to go find the ball, rather than let it come to him.

Arrington can stay on the field for all four downs, a luxury in the specialist-crazed NFL. Last season, he stopped the run, rushed the passer, stepped into space to cover slot receivers such as Ohio State's Ken-Yon Rambo and Michigan's Marcus Knight and played on several special teams. Still, there remains a fear in the NFL that great athletes don't always fit into pro schemes, which require substantial discipline. Tampa Bay director of college scouting Tim Ruskell remembers when the Bucs selected Alabama end Keith McCants, who appeared to have all the physical skills necessary to be a star but never blossomed. He worries whether that might happen to Arrington, who played outside linebacker, end and even strong safety (as a freshman) at Penn State. Then again, he might be hoping enough NFL teams think the same thing, so that the linebacker will fall far enough for Tampa Bay to scoop him up, much as it did with Warren Sapp in 1995.

"Arrington doesn't fit anybody's scheme, where you can say, 'He does exactly what we ask so-and-so to do in our system,' " Ruskell says. "There's always been that seed of doubt."

Then there is the matter of Arrington's personality, which has been viewed by some as volatile. It's hard to look at the footage of his two scuffles with Pitt punter Greg DeBolt and not wonder whether Arrington may be strung too tightly. In their most memorable skirmish, the two players did a great WWF spoof. When DeBolt's teammate, D.J. Dinkins, arrived on the scene, Arrington smacked him in the facemask, drawing an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. NFL teams are certain to ask Arrington about the situation.

"If an NFL person asks me about those incidents, I'll tell him to watch the films," Arrington says. "I was doing my job. People blow things out of proportion all the time. They say, 'I beat that punter up.' To the uninformed eye, that's how it looks. But I blocked him. The first time, I held him down, because I didn't want to hurt him anymore. The time I lay on him, I was just doing what I've had done to me.

"I never threw a blow at him. I never beat him up. You have to sit down and use your knowledge of football to evaluate what I did. I was doing my job. If he doesn't want to get hit, get off the field."

Brown won't have to face a similar line of questioning. If anything, NFL scouts will wonder whether Brown has the nasty demeanor necessary for success along the defensive front. "Courtney is very, very quiet," Donahoe says. But effective. He had 13½ sacks last season and excelled at rushing the passer, a quality every team covets.

"Brown is a combination pass rusher," Eagles general manager Tom Modrak says. "If he doesn't get the edge, he has enough strength and use of his hands to counter well. He's not just an upfield rusher. He's a combination, the best of both worlds."

The question mark on Brown: his run-stuffing ability. Part of the trouble is due to size. Brown is listed at 270 pounds, a weight that doesn't lead many to believe he can outmuscle the league's offensive linemen, particularly if he is drafted by a team that uses a 3-4 scheme and at times puts its ends over hulking NFL guards. But Ruskell thinks Brown improved in that area last season by playing lower against tackles and tight ends in ground situations. He was more effective in taking blockers on and creating logjams that permitted Penn State's linebackers to make tackles.

"Pass rushing is his forté, but he was better this year against the run," Ruskell says. "He had a better pad level and showed better technique. If a player can't get low, he'll be driven back. Courtney improved in that, but he hasn't reached his ceiling."

Brown's all-around play has led scouts to believe he could play either right or left end in a 4-3 alignment. Most pro ends who play the right side are more pass-rush oriented, the better to reach a quarterback's blindside, while those who line up on the left are often better at stopping the run. Brown is a combination of both, something that leads Savage to compare him favorably to the top ends in recent drafts, such as Greg Ellis, Andre Wadsworth and Ebenezer Ekuban.

Arrington has another comparison. He's flattered that some are likening him to Kearse, but Arrington believes his teammate is closer in talent to the Titans' prodigy.

"Courtney will be the same type of player as a rookie that Jevon has been," Arrington says. "He's that gifted. He ran a 4.5 40. You show me somebody that looks like Courtney Brown who can do that."

And show us a college team with two defensive players likely to be drafted as high as Arrington and Brown. No wonder Savage wishes Atlanta had lost more games.

Michael Bradley is a writer based in Philadelphia.

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Scoring Categories:

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Runs Batted In (RBI)	Saves (S)
Stolen Bases (SB)	WHIP (WHIP)
Runs Scored (Runs)	Strikeouts (SO)

WHIP - (walks + hits)/innings pitched)

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CATCHERS:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
2101	Rodriguez, Ivan	TEX	1950
2102	Piazza, Mike	NYM	1500
2103	Kendall, Jason	PIT	1440
2104	Lieberthal, Mike	PHI	1250
2105	Nilsson, Dave	MIL	1200
2106	Lopez, Javy	ATL	1180
2107	Taubensee, Eddie	CIN	1060
2108	Fletcher, Darrin	TOR	870
2109	Varitek, Jason	BOS	850
2110	Ausmus, Brad	DET	840
2111	Hundley, Todd	LA	800
2112	Flaherty, John	TB	740
2114	Alomar Jr., Sandy	CLE	700
2115	Widger, Chris	MON	690
2116	Johnson, Charles	BAL	660
2117	Posada, Jorge	NYY	650
2120	Wilson, Dan	SEA	620
2122	Santiago, Benito	CHC	580
2123	Hernandez, Ramon	OAK	560
2126	Marrero, Eli	STL	510
2130	Pratt, Todd	NYM	470

FIRST BASEMEN:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
3101	Bagwell, Jeff	HOU	2050
3102	Palmeiro, Rafael	TEX	1750
3103	McGwire, Mark	STL	1740
3104	Helton, Todd	COL	1620
3105	Young, Kevin	PIT	1550
3106	Giambi, Jason	OAK	1500
3107	Delgado, Carlos	TOR	1480
3108	Galarraga, Andres	ATL	1470
3109	Karros, Eric	LA	1400
3110	Martinez, Edgar	SEA	1400
3111	Casey, Sean	CIN	1370
3112	Sweeney, Mike	KC	1330
3113	Vaughn, Mo	ANA	1300
3114	Thome, Jim	CLE	1270
3115	Clark, Tony	DET	1250
3116	Olerud, John	NYM	1220
3117	McGriff, Fred	TB	1210
3118	Grace, Mark	CHC	1140
3119	Jaha, John	OAK	1120
3120	Brogna, Rico	PHI	1100
3121	Lee, Travis	ARZ	1050
3122	Martinez, Tino	NYY	1040
3123	Konerko, Paul	CWS	1030
3124	Thomas, Frank	CWS	1020
3125	Erstad, Darin	ANA	1000
3132	Stanley, Mike	BOS	830
3133	Segui, David	TOR	820
3134	Clark, Will	BAL	810
3140	Joyner, Wally	SD	580
3141	Berry, Sean	MIL	450

SECOND BASEMEN:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
4101	Alomar, Roberto	CLE	1990
4102	Biggio, Craig	HOU	1660
4103	Knoblauch, Chuck	NYY	1600
4104	Durham, Ray	CWS	1550
4105	Alfonzo, Edgardo	NYM	1510
4106	Bell, Jay	ARZ	1480
4107	Kent, Jeff	SF	1380
4108	Young, Eric	CHC	1370
4109	Castillo, Luis	FLA	1310
4110	Velarde, Randy	OAK	1280
4111	Offerman, Jose	BOS	1260
4112	Veras, Quilvio	SD	1220
4113	Reese, Pokey	CIN	1210
4114	Bush, Homer	TOR	1100
4115	Easley, Damion	DET	1090
4118	Bell, David	SEA	960
4119	McLemore, Mark	TEX	950
4120	Febles, Carlos	KC	930
4121	Walker, Todd	MIN	920
4129	McEwing, Joe	STL	740
4130	Vina, Fernando	MIL	720
4132	Guerrero, Wilton	MON	650
4139	Spiezio, Scott	OAK	450

SHORTSTOPS:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
5101	Rodriguez, Alex	SEA	1900
5102	Jeter, Derek	NYY	1880
5103	Garciaparra, Nomar	BOS	1800
5104	Vizquel, Omar	CLE	1650
5105	Larkin, Barry	CIN	1450
5106	Renteria, Edgar	STL	1350
5107	Batista, Tony	TOR	1200
5108	Perez, Neifi	COL	1100
5109	Grudzielanek, Mark	LA	980
5110	Tejada, Miguel	OAK	970
5111	Bordick, Mike	BAL	950
5112	Aurilia, Rich	SF	950
5113	Hernandez, Jose	MIL	920
5114	Clayton, Royce	TEX	920
5115	Gonzalez, Alex	FLA	820
5116	Cruz, Deivi	DET	770
5117	Loretta, Mark	MIL	760
5118	Jackson, Damian	SD	710
5119	Gonzalez, Alex	TOR	710
5120	Stocker, Kevin	TB	700
5121	Meares, Pat	PIT	690
5122	Caruso, Mike	CWS	640
5123	Sanchez, Rey	KC	600
5124	Valentin, Jose	MIL	600
5125	DiSarcina, Gary	ANA	600
5126	Ordonez, Rey	NYM	570
5127	Cabrera, Orlando	MON	520
5128	Gutierrez, Ricky	HOU	510
5129	Nieves, Jose	CHC	500
5130	Guillen, Carlos	SEA	500

THIRD BASEMEN:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
6101	Jones, Chipper	ATL	1970
6102	Tatis, Fernando	STL	1580
6103	Williams, Matt	ARZ	1520
6104	Ventura, Robin	NYM	1330
6105	Cirillo, Jeff	COL	1300
6106	Rolen, Scott	PHI	1290
6107	Castilla, Vinny	TB	1260
6108	Palmer, Dean	DET	1210
6109	Randa, Joe	KC	1170
6110	Caminiti, Ken	HOU	1120
6111	Zeile, Todd	NYM	1100
6112	Beltre, Adrian	LA	1090
6113	Fernandez, Tony	TOR	1080
6114	Ripken Jr., Cal	BAL	1070
6115	Fryman, Travis	CLE	1000
6116	Boone, Aaron	CIN	990
6117	Glaus, Troy	ANA	930
6118	Sprague, Ed	PIT	900
6119	Nevin, Phil	SD	870
6120	Brosius, Scott	NYY	850
6123	Valentin, John	BOS	770
6125	Davis, Russ	SEA	680
6129	Andrews, Shane	CHC	550
6130	Greene, Willie	TOR	510
6132	Spiers, Bill	HOU	490
6134	Wilson, Enrique	CLE	450

OUTFIELDERS:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
7101	Ramirez, Manny	CLE	1950
7102	Green,m Shawn	LA	1940
7103	Griffey Jr., Ken	SEA	1910
7104	Walker, Larry	COL	1900
7105	Gonzalez, Juan	DET	1890
7106	Sosa, Sammy	CHC	1860
7108	Guerrero, Vladimir	MON	1740
7109	Abreu, Bobby	PHI	1730
7110	Bonds, Barry	SF	1710
7111	Belle, Albert	BAL	1690
7112	Mondesi, Raul	TOR	1670
7113	Williams, Bernie	NYY	1670
7115	Anderson, Brady	BAL	1620
7116	Alou, Moises	HOU	1590
7117	Stewart, Shannon	TOR	1590
7118	Giles, Brian S.	PIT	1590
7120	Everett, Carl	HOU	1510
7121	Ordonez, Magglio	CWS	1500
7122	Bichette, Dante	CIN	1500
7123	Sheffield, Gary	LA	1480
7124	Vaughn, Greg	CIN	1470
7125	Gonzalez, Luis	ARZ	1460
7126	Sanders, Reggie	SD	1450
7127	Beltran, Carlos	KC	1450
7128	Jones, Andruw	ATL	1450
7130	Cedeno, Roger	NYM	1380
7131	Cameron, Mike	CIN	1380
7132	White, Rondell	MON	1370
7133	Jordan, Brian	ATL	1350
7134	Surhoff, B.J.	BAL	1330
7135	Lofton, Kenny	CLE	1300
7136	Lankford, Ray	STL	1290
7137	Burnitz, Jeromy	MIL	1280
7138	Dye, Jermaine	KC	1270
7139	Finley, Steve	ARZ	1260
7140	Encarnacion, Juan	DET	1250
7141	O'Neill, Paul	NYY	1220
7142	Burks, Ellis	SF	1210
7143	Greer, Rusty	TEX	1200
7144	Grissom, Marquis	MIL	1190
7145	Canseco, Jose	TB	1170
7147	Rodriguez, Henry	CHC	1160
7148	Martin, Al	PIT	1150
7149	Stairs, Matt	OAK	1150
7150	Salmon, Tim	ANA	1140
7152	Gwynn, Tony	SD	1130
7154	Grieve, Ben	OAK	1120
7155	O'Leary, Troy	BOS	1110
7156	Gant, Ron	PHI	1070
7157	Lawton, Matt	MIN	1060
7165	Justice, David	CLE	990
7167	Hunter, Brian L.	SEA	980
7172	Huskey, Butch	BOS	930
7173	Drew, J.D.	STL	910
7174	Young, Dmitri	CIN	900
7180	Davis, Chili	NYY	850
7183	Higginson, Bob	DET	840
7188	Edmonds, Jim	ANA	780
7189	Kapler, Gabe	TEX	770
7193	Buhner, Jay	SEA	750
7211	Mateo, Ruben	TEX	620

STARTING PITCHERS:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
1101	Martinez, Pedro	BOS	2100
1102	Johnson, Randy	ARZ	1920
1103	Brown, Kevin	LA	1780
1104	Millwood, Kevin	ATL	1650
1105	Hampton, Mike	HOU	1580
1106	Lima, Jose	HOU	1520
1107	Maddux, Greg	ATL	1440
1108	Mussina, Mike	BAL	1400
1109	Smoltz, John	ATL	1400
1110	Schilling, Curt	PHI	1380
1111	Reynolds, Shane	HOU	1370
1112	Daal, Omar	ARZ	1300
1113	Colon, Bartolo	CLE	1290
1114	Ortiz, Russ	SF	1280
1115	Cone, David	NYY	1270
1116	Glavine, Tom	ATL	1260
1117	Leiter, Al	NYM	1250
1118	Hernandez, Orlando	NYY	1240
1119	Harnisch, Pete	CIN	1230
1120	Clemens, Roger	NYY	1230
1121	Garcia, Freddy	SEA	1220
1122	Moyer, Jamie	SEA	1220
1123	Ashby, Andy	PHI	1190
1124	Burba, Dave	CLE	1190
1125	Hitchcock, Sterling	SD	1180
1126	Guzman, Juan	CIN	1150
1127	Radke, Brad	MIN	1150
1128	Wood, Kerry	CHC	1150
1129	Hudson, Tim	OAK	1140
1130	Lieber, Jon	CHC	1130
1131	Finley, Chuck	CLE	1130
1132	Wells, David	TOR	1130
1133	Sele, Aaron	TEX	1120
1134	Ritchie, Todd	PIT	1110
1135	Rosado, Jose	KC	1110
1136	Schmidt, Jason	PIT	1100
1137	Neagle, Denny	CIN	1090
1138	Martinez, Ramon	BOS	1070
1139	Benes, Alan	STL	1070
1140	Benson, Kris	PIT	1060
1141	Sirotka, Mike	CWS	1060
1142	Valdes, Ismael	CHC	1060
1143	Elarton, Scott	HOU	1060
1144	Stottlemyre, Todd	ARZ	1040
1145	Hermanson, Dustin	MON	1030
1146	Olivares, Omar	OAK	1030
1147	Williams, Woody	SD	1020
1148	Saberhagen, Bret	BOS	1000
1149	Nomo, Hideo	MIL	990
1150	Fernandez, Alex	FLA	990
1151	Rogers, Kenny	NYM	980
1152	Morris, Matt	STL	980
1153	Nagy, Charles	CLE	970
1154	Milton, Eric	MIN	970
1155	Mlicki, Dave	DET	970
1156	Erickson, Scott	BAL	960
1157	Helling, Rick	TEX	950
1158	Park, Chan Ho	LA	950
1164	Pettitte, Andy	NYY	930
1187	Bottenfield, Kent	STL	850
1188	Astacio, Pedro	COL	850
1189	Mulholland, Terry	ATL	850
1190	Kile, Darryl	STL	840
1198	Thompson, Justin	TEX	800
1213	Rapp, Pat	BOS	710
1216	Jones, Bobby	NYM	670

RELIEF PITCHERS:

ID#	Name	Team	Value
1501	Wagner, Billy	HOU	2050
1502	Rivera, Mariano	NYY	1980
1503	Hoffman, Trevor	SD	1900
1504	Rocker, John	ATL	1870
1505	Benitez, Armando	NYM	1840
1506	Urbina, Ugueth	MON	1730
1507	Mantei, Matt	ARZ	1700
1508	Hernandez, Roberto	TB	1650
1509	Wetteland, John	TEX	1610
1510	Shaw, Jeff	LA	1590
1511	Nen, Robb	SF	1580
1516	Percival, Troy	ANA	1440
1519	Aguilera, Rick	CHC	1350
1523	Zimmerman, Jeff	TEX	1260
1526	Franco, John	NYM	1120
1529	Bottalico, Ricky	STL	1100
1532	Karsay, Steve	CLE	1080
1533	Mesa, Jose	SEA	1080
1536	Remlinger, Mike	ATL	990
1538	Brocail, Doug	DET	960
1539	Isringhausen, Jason	OAK	950
1543	Silva, Jose	PIT	870
1545	Boehringer, Brian	SD	850
1546	Mendoza, Ramiro	NYY	830
1559	Swindell, Greg	ARZ	780
1569	Ayala, Bobby	CHC	740
1579	Acevedo, Juan	STL	700
1584	Hasegawa, Shigetoshi	ANA	680
1585	Springer, Russ	ATL	670

Roster is current as of 11/22/99

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MAIL ENTRY TO: TSN FANTASY BASEBALL CHALLENGE · P.O. Box 142916 · Irving, TX 75014

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FIRST NAME LAST NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

YOUR TEAM NAME

HOME PHONE

HAVE YOU PLAYED WITH US BEFORE? ❑ YES ❑ NO

IF YES, ENTER YOUR PREVIOUS TEAM ID#

CREDIT CARD NUMBER (Visa, MC, AMEX & Discover accepted.) EXP. DATE

FAXED ENTRIES ACCEPTED AT (972)969-1898

Signature Email:

ENTER EARLY AND SAVE!

❑ ENTRY POSTMARKED BY 3/4/00 QTY_____X $49.95 _____

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❑ $100 TRADE CREDITS (SAVE 20%) QTY____X $80.00 _____

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POS	ID#	VALUE	POS	ID#	VALUE	POS	ID#	VALUE
C			OF			SP		
C			OF			SP		
1B			OF			SP		
1B			OF			SP		
2B			OF			SP		
2B			OF			SP		
3B			DH			RP		
3B			DH			RP		
SS						RP		
SS						RP		

REQUIRED: TOTAL YOUR TEAM'S VALUE. (CANNOT EXCEED 35,000,000) _____ X 1,000

III. BENCH

	ID#	VALUE		ID#	VALUE
1.			7.		
2.			8.		
3.			9.		
4.			10.		
5.			11.		
6.			12.		

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NOTHING SLIPS PAST NFL TEAMS WHEN THEY INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL DRAFT PICKS

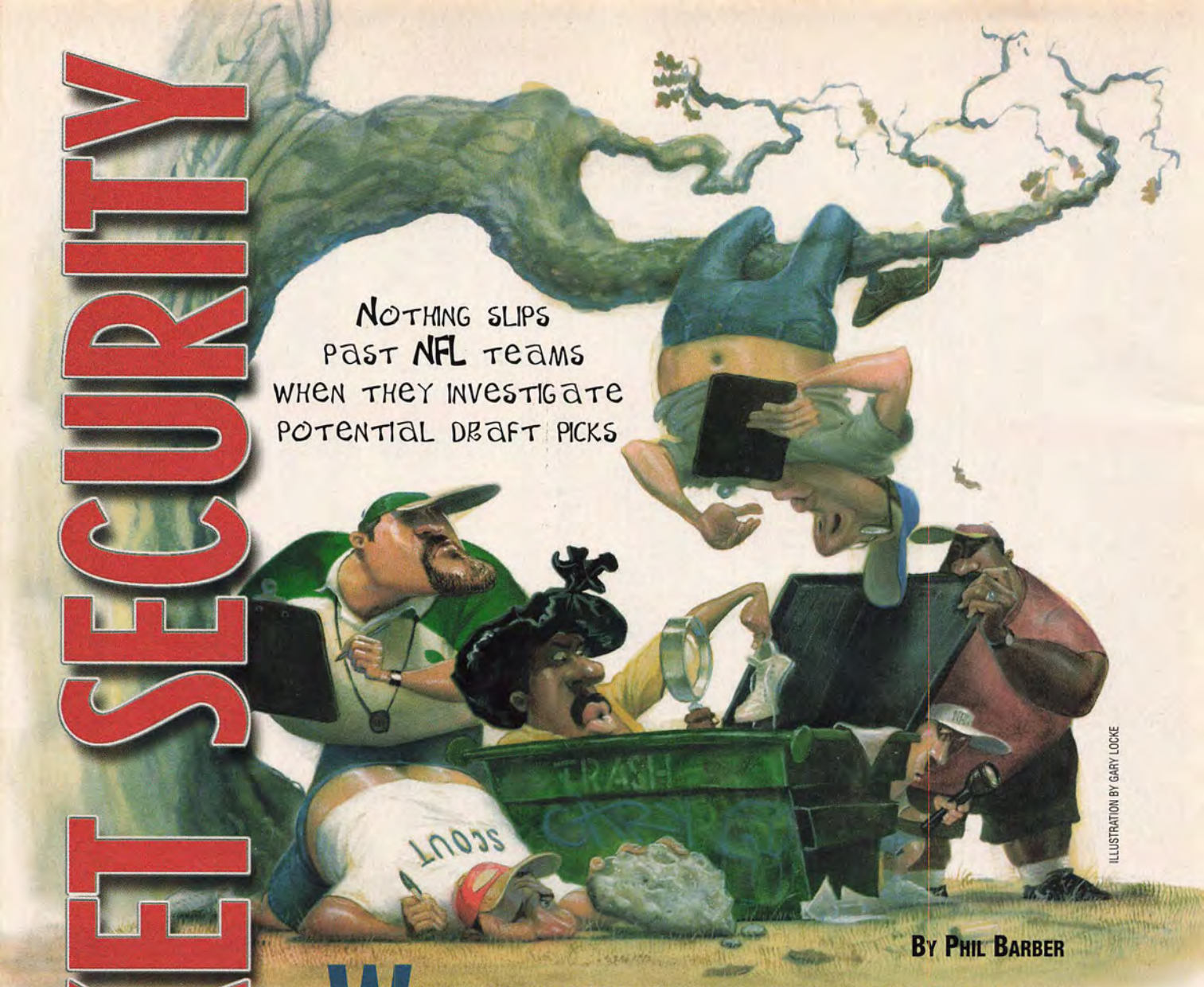

ILLUSTRATION BY GARY LOCKE

BY PHIL BARBER

When star Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis was charged with the stabbing deaths of two men in Atlanta in January, it further dimmed the lights on a dark NFL season off the field. Lewis may well be not guilty, but the grisly incident nevertheless brought to mind other recent episodes: the attempted suicide of troubled Vikings draft pick Dimitrius Underwood ... the arrest of Panthers wide receiver Rae Carruth on charges of conspiracy to murder his pregnant girlfriend ... the arrest of Dolphins running back Cecil Collins on burglary charges. Fred Lane, Bam Morris, Tamarick Vanover ... the list goes on.

The cumulative weight of these moral scrapes, and others, has left many fans outraged. "The NFL should be doing something," they cry, "to keep criminals off its payrolls."

The fact is, the league and its 31 teams go to great lengths to identify players—potential draft choices, in particular—of questionable character. They have no fondness for bad publicity, and nobody wants to waste a draft pick on a guy who spends more time with his probation officer than his position coach. So they do whatever they can—from scanning police records to interviewing childhood friends—to form a complete picture of a player's background.

Clearly, teams don't always heed warning signals. Sometimes, a player's physical skills are too tantalizing to resist, especially in the lower rounds. But when clubs do make the leap, they usually know what they're getting into. When the NFL explores an athlete's social profile, it leaves little to the imagination.

"We knew a player inside-out," says Tony Razzano, former college scouting director for the 49ers. "I can't remember a time when we reached the draft and didn't know what we had."

The issue of an athlete's "conscious restraint," as one scout puts it, never has been more important to NFL teams. Locker-room chemistry still is a key component of success, and the salary cap has brought yet more pragmatic concerns.

"If you have a cap tragedy—if a guy gets arrested and you pay out his $10 million signing bonus all in one year—it really handicaps you," says a longtime AFC scout (some sources for this story insisted upon anonymity). "Insurance can help you with a medical thing. But if you blow it on a guy because of character, you're screwed."

It's not surprising, then, that the NFL would conduct pre-draft background checks on college seniors and eligible underclassmen. "I think it's wise," Florida State coach Bobby Bowden says. "They're putting millions of dollars into these kids. If an athlete has a quirk, they need to know about it."

The first phase of discovery is carried out by NFL Security, the league's investigative arm.

Senior director of security Milt Ahlerich and his staff get involved in a variety of cases. They probed Everett McIver's puncture wound (supposedly inflicted by Cowboys teammate Michael Irvin, with barber's shears), the disputed phone call made, or not made, by Jaguars receiver Keenan McCardell to former Steelers linebacker Greg Lloyd's family a few years ago, and even the Champions for Christ ministry which, some worried, was coercing players into affiliation.

And in the months before the draft, Ahlerich's staff runs background checks. The teams list players—Rick Reiprish, the Jaguars' director of player personnel, says his club submits 200-250 names in January or February—and NFL Security goes to work.

Much of what the security men compile already is public knowledge, available to anyone who does a little digging. But they also use their law-enforcement backgrounds to pry open records the average fan never sees, building files on dozens of prospects (including, they point out, obvious good eggs such as Peyton Manning and Ricky Williams). The individual teams then can access this information, though no one ranked below personnel director or head coach is authorized to make the call.

"It's not so much a written report as an oral conversation," the AFC scout explains. "We'll call NFL security and say, tell me about these five guys, or these 10. It's on the teams. It's not like the league calls to say, 'So-and-so beat up a woman today.' "

The NFL security reports are not particularly deep, and they're available to all 31 clubs. So to really get an edge, teams must do independent research. That's where team scouts come in.

When most of us think of NFL scouts, we envision men who are obsessed with physical aptitude—40-yard dash time, vertical leap, ability to throw the deep out. More and more, however, teams ask their scouts to be amateur sleuths who ferret out potential troublemakers. Scouts talk to a player's teammates, roommates, coaches, teachers and just about anyone else in a position of observation.

"I can recall being at a little school, looking at a pretty good running back," Razzano says. "We had heard some bad word about him. So I pulled into a gas station near the school, and I asked the attendant, 'Do you know so-and-so?'

"He said, 'Oh, yes.'

"I said, 'So what do you think?'

"And he told me, 'Good football player, but baaad, baaad, baaad.' I can still hear him say those words. We passed."

Gary Horton, a longtime NFL talent evaluator and head of The War Room, recalls another incident: "One time, some scouts went to Tennessee, had dinner at a diner. While they were there, they asked the cook about a (player) they were looking at. The guy went off, told about what a jerk the guy was, how he stiffed the waitresses. That story made it all over the NFL."

According to Razzano, his scouts would go back to an athlete's high school associates, and even his junior high school, if they thought it might help flesh out the picture of a prospect. Other scouts confirm this, citing Lawrence Phillips as someone who was investigated so thoroughly.

On campus, the universities control the time and place of investigation. The locker room is normally off-limits. At the same time, most schools say they attempt to be as open as possible.

"I feel like it carries over," says Bowden, whose program has taken heat for some of the high-risk players it has accepted. "If I'm going to get straight answers from high school coaches when I'm recruiting one of their players, I have to be straight, too."

Of course, not everyone can be considered a reliable source. "Some coaches are biased," Razzano says. "Maybe one coach recruited the player and doesn't want to look bad. What you get may not be an honest evaluation." Experienced scouts have a big advantage over beginners because, over time, they learn whom to trust.

The inquiry may end there, with the scouts, or it may go deeper. It all depends on what they find. "If the college coaches and the NFL say he's fine, you don't need much work after that," says Russ Lande, who worked in personnel for the Rams and now publishes an NFL draft guide called *GM Jr.* "If the coaches are real evasive or use clichés, you call in the investigator."

The "investigator" is not someone from NFL security. Sometimes, it's a member of the team's front office who carries a title along the lines of "director of security." And these aren't guys who earned their titles by making sure the gates were locked every night. They're pros.

The Redskins' vice president of security is Bruce J. Bowen, former deputy director of the U.S. Secret Service and a man who worked for four U.S. presidents. Jets director of security Steve Yarnell spent 22 years as a special agent with the FBI, service that included investigating the World Trade Center bombing and guarding the highest-paid terrorism informant in the bureau's history.

Just as often, the investigator is a more shadowy figure who doesn't appear in any official team directory. Almost always, he's a former FBI agent or police detective. "When you hire a guy, you hire his contacts," the AFC scout says. "It's mostly a networking thing."

At this level, teams are investigating only a few players. Reiprish says the Jaguars investigate "no more than 20 a year." But these are the guys who worry teams most. When running a background check on a college player—or, similarly, a veteran free agent—the security man can do much of his snooping over the phone.

A source who works for one of the world's largest private investigation firms says a standard check would include criminal records (though most juvenile offenses will not appear) and driving histories. The latter—available via commercial, limited-access database in some states, to the general public in others—will reveal if a prospect is getting popped for speeding or reckless driving.

A credit report might provide a valuable snapshot of an athlete's finances, though he would have to authorize its release. Even better, if you could locate them, would be student-life records. Universities like to deal with problems internally. If a resident assistant in the dormitory has a problem with an athlete, for example, he or she may file a complaint that never sees the light of day.

All this information would be helpful, but if the case warrants it an NFL security director will grab his dark sunglasses and hit the road for field interviews. "Take someone like Ray Lewis," the investigator says. "The biggest problem was his friends. You can only find that out by going (to his hometown). I'd get in touch with the local police station, talk to the beat officers if possible. You can access a lot of information online these days. But to do it properly, you do it in person."

"When I was with the Cleveland Browns," says Horton, "we had a guy named Ted Chappelle. He was an ex-New York vice cop. He'd go into a guy's hometown for three or four days and wind up with a 10- or 12-page report—where the kid was going, who he was hanging out with, what his habits were. The kid never even knew Ted was there."

With such a layered system of investigation, it may be surprising that the baaad, baaad guys ever show up in an NFL uniform. The problem, quite simply, is the tremendous pressure to win. Rather than being an up-or-down deciding factor, background checks tend to become part of a more complex equation.

"You have to measure how bad he is against his ability as a player," Razzano says. Or as the AFC scout puts it: "Where (in the draft) is this guy not a risk?"

Most NFL teams, as they prepare for draft day, fill out a card for each intriguing player. On it they list standard information such as

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ILLUSTRATION BY GARY LOCKE

position, height, weight and speed. And next to some names they stick colored marks, called "shields" or "dots." A red shield might signify an injury; a black shield might suggest the player doesn't fit into the team's current system. And a green shield might sound the alarm on questionable character.

Not all missteps carry equal weight. Insubordination or chronic tardiness might be worse than minor legal problems. A cocaine habit or history of violence against women might cause a card to be removed from the board altogether. One AFC personnel director says his team eliminates four or five athletes a year, from a pool of hundreds, on the basis of character. Reiprish says it's more like 30 in Jacksonville. "Our organization assigns a high priority to character," he says. "Some teams say, 'It's only marijuana.' That's a problem we don't want to address."

"You don't like to see drugs or steroids," says retired scout Milt Davis, who worked with four NFL teams, most recently the Lions in the mid-'90s. "You don't mind DUI convictions, if you feel you can work with the player. Theft? You don't want to get involved."

Some fans wonder why any of these dubious traits are tolerated. But for every Lawrence Phillips or Cecil Collins, there is a Cris Carter or Craig (Ironhead) Heyward, troubled young men who turned their lives around. "If you feel you can pick him up and cure him of his ills, then it's worth it," Razzano says.

The current poster boy for personality transfusions is Giants defensive tackle Christian Peter. He was arrested eight times and convicted four times, on a variety of charges, while at Nebraska. He was a wreck. The Giants told Peter he was gone after the first problem, but it hasn't happened. Peter hasn't missed a single meeting. He reads at pregame mass. The interesting part is that the Patriots had taken him in the fifth round of the 1996 draft. They released him three days later, saying they were unaware of the extent of his criminal deeds.

After reading this story, you can judge for yourself the sincerity of that claim. As the scouts told us repeatedly, very little escapes the eyes of the National Football League as it evaluates prospective employees in this age of fingertip information.

"They're the NFL," the former NFC scout says. "They've got influence. If they call a police agency about a report, you can bet they'll get a copy."

Phil Barber is a free-lance writer in Calistoga, Calif.

CHARACTER REFERENCE

As a good NFL scout develops a relationship with one of the 40 to 60 colleges in his jurisdiction, he learns to find the one person whose word is gold. It can be just about anybody, but conversations with personnel men reveal a common hierarchy of sources—from most to least reliable:

1. Position coach. "The position coaches know the most," says Milt Davis, who was an NFL scout for 30 years. "They work with those guys every day."

2. Trainer. "The trainer can tell you about a player's personality, about how well he responds to injuries, how tough he is, if he wants to get out of practice," says Jack Faulkner, the Rams' administrator for pro personnel. "You hear a lot of junk in those locker rooms."

3. Strength coach.

4. Equipment manager.

5. Head coach. A renowned fibber if he can put his program in a positive light.

6. Family members. Not automatically eliminated for bias, as you might have guessed. "If nothing else, you get a sense of the character of the mother and father," says Tony Razzano, who scouted in the NFL for 25 years.

7. Teammates. They see it all, but some would lie to protect the prospect, and some would lie to injure him.

8. The player himself. "It's murky," says Davis. "He doesn't want to be a confessor. But if he has given the information before, it's easy for him to do a second time."

9. Agent. Though there is a natural tension between NFL scouts and college coaches, they are united in their mistrust of player representatives. "Sometimes, the agent steps in and denies information," Davis says. "What he doesn't understand is that without this information, we have to assume the worst."—*P.B.*

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The Sporting News online

more than a GAME

By Gary Horton

Photos By Dilip Vishwanat / TSN

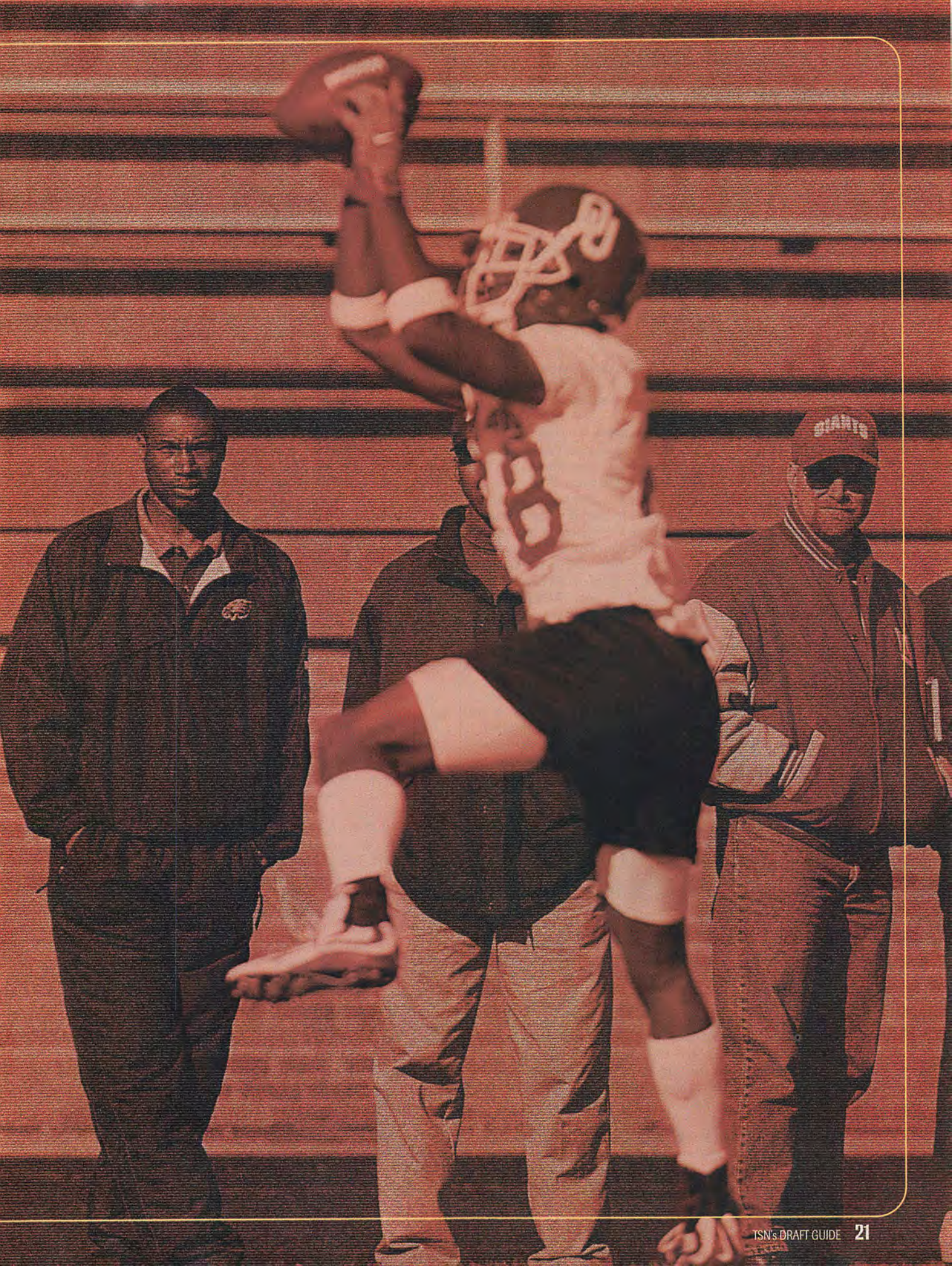
Mobile is a quiet town with a fascinating history on Alabama's Gulf Coast, but for one week each year in late January it turns into the unofficial headquarters of the NFL. The occasion is Senior Bowl week.

College prospects, NFL coaches, NFL talent scouts and player agents—so many that it's hard to turn around without bumping into one—all converge on Mobile the week before the conference championship games to see what the upcoming NFL draft has to offer. Few of the players in attendance are strangers to NFL team officials—after all, they've been scouting them for months—but the Senior Bowl offers a weeklong opportunity to poke, prod and observe dozens of the nation's top prospects. Even with most of the elite players generally choosing not to attend (Peter Warrick, Courtney Brown and Corey Simon were among the absentees this year), there's no better place to watch previews of coming attractions. It's the Cannes Film Festival of the NFL draft.

Senior Bowl week gives NFL team officials a chance to poke, prod and examine some of the best players from college football. And after they're done, they might even want to draft them.

Ironically, the least interesting part of Senior Bowl week for NFL folks is the game itself. By the time the North and South squads line up Saturday afternoon, most of the coaches, scouts and front-office types are gone. They've already seen what they want to see—lots of practices—and talked to whomever they want to talk to—the players and, often, candidates for assistant coaching jobs. When you think of the Senior Bowl, you think of the players, but there's a lot of other business transacted on practice fields and in restaurants and hotel lobbies.

I started attending Senior Bowl week as a scout for the Bucs and Browns. Though I left the NFL seven years ago, I still go to Mobile every year as part of my work analyzing college and pro players for The War Room. My trip this year was my 18th. It's a hectic week, especially since I know so many of the people there, and I have a lot of catching up to do, but it's a great week. Let me tell you about it.


GIANTS

more than a GAME

Getting started

Senior Bowl week typically starts on Sunday, which this year was January 16, the day second-round NFL playoff games were being completed. Players and scouts generally arrive early in the day so they can watch the games. Several players come directly from the San Francisco Bay area after having played in the East-West Shrine Game on Saturday. These players take a red-eye flight from San Francisco to Mobile; they are escorted by Senior Bowl officials who want to ensure that no one misses his flight.

Among the various college all-star games, which include the East-West game, the Hula Bowl and the Blue-Gray Classic, the Senior Bowl is the most prestigious. It's the only one coached by entire NFL coaching staffs; this year George Seifert and his Panthers staff coached the North team, and Gunther Cunningham and his Chiefs staff coached the South. These were the teams from each conference that came closest without making the playoffs.

They run outstanding practice sessions with lots of one-on-one instruction that help scouts greatly in their evaluations. This is what sets the Senior Bowl apart. Scouts can interview players at other games, but the practice sessions are basically worthless. The Senior Bowl pretty much gets its pick of players, except for the most elite prospects who stand to gain nothing and would risk injury by playing in any all-star game. The roster is assembled by Senior Bowl president Steve Hale, a former college coach who pores over hours and hours of film, attends a college game almost every Saturday during the season, spends hundreds of hours on the phone interviewing coaches and NFL personnel men—all to determine the best candidates. NFL teams also will indicate players they would like to see in this game, but ultimately, it's Hale's call. He has a keen eye for talent.

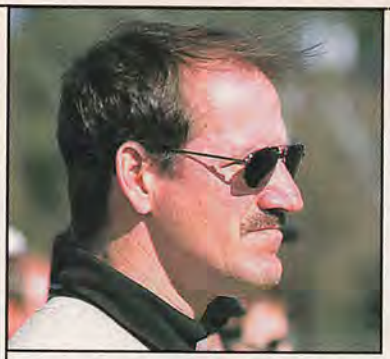
Though the roster is basically set a couple weeks before the game, Hale will make last-minute adjustments. If a player gets hurt or has to bypass the game, Hale goes to his emergency list for a replacement. I remember Hale plugging in a young tight end with questionable credentials two days before the players showed up in 1995 because another tight end had withdrawn because of an injury. The replacement had been a tight end in a run-and-shoot offense at New Mexico, and while he had good college stats, he wasn't seen as a high draft choice. But Hale believed in the player, who had a great week of practice and was drafted in the third round by Detroit. That player, David Sloan, just made his first Pro Bowl appearance.

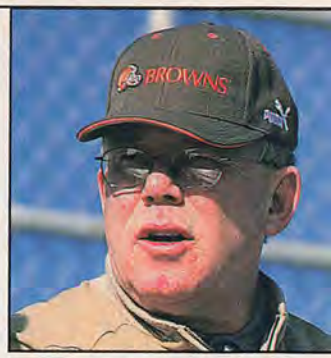
GOING UP? *Like the elevators they wait for, players' draft stock can go up—or down—during the week.*

Sunday is a somewhat lazy day. NFL teams set up their interview rooms and players unwind from their travel. They don't get down to serious business until the next day.

Cattle call and practices

The worst part of Senior Bowl week for the players comes first. On Monday morning, players line up in a ballroom at the Adam's Mark Hotel for one of the most humiliating experiences of the draft process: getting weighed and measured.





EYE TO EYE: *Senior Bowl week gives coaches such as (left to right) Bill Cowher, Chris Palmer and Steve Mariucci a chance to scout players firsthand.*

With as many as 500 coaches and scouts in the ballroom, players are asked to strip to their shorts. Then they are weighed, measured and examined as all of these coaches and scouts describe every body part in detail, recording their observations on notepads and tape recorders.

Monday afternoon marks the first official practices. The North and South teams practice at the same time, but at different sites. Practices the next three days are staggered so they can be observed by all.

The first practice comes as a surprise for most players. That's because the field is swamped with NFL officials—there were more than 600 at this year's practices. All practices are free and open to the public, but the vast majority of observers are coaches, general managers and other front-office personnel. Some are in the stands, but many are on the field, right on top of the drills. Though coaches from teams still in the playoffs can't be there, the other 27 teams are well represented. That means that if you're an offensive lineman, for example, doing one-on-one pass-blocking drills, your every movement is being watched just feet away by 27 NFL offensive line coaches. Talk about a reality check.

Every practice is filmed. For many teams this is the first opportunity to break down a player and get a handle on his athleticism, flexibility, overall movement, strength, explosion and so on. These practice tapes are thoroughly reviewed by each organization at the end of the week.

Testing

NFL officials find out much of what they need to know on the field, but they find out even more through written tests and interviews.

Players fill out a lot of questionnaires during Senior Bowl week. These questionnaires, which are prepared separately by each NFL team, are like job applications. They provide personal background that teams keep on file. Some teams also give players the Wonderlic intelligence test and/or a form of a psychological test that, in theory, gives them the starting point for a mental profile of the player.

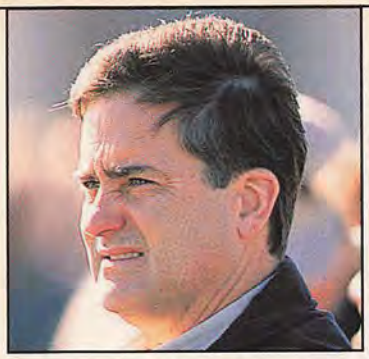
The test that everyone talks about is the one given by the New York Giants. It has 400 questions and can take up to two hours. Many players hate it, other teams make fun of it, but the Giants believe they can get a good fix on a player's personality with it. If nothing else, they can get some read on a player by observing his reaction to the test itself. For instance, Tennessee wide receiver Carl Pickens was taking the test eight years ago. Clearly bored, he asked a Giants official in the room where the Giants were picking in the first round.

"Fourteenth," was the response.

"I'll be drafted long before that," Pickens responded, and walked out of the room.

Not surprisingly, that irritated the Giants. Even worse for Pickens, every other NFL team knew within 24 hours what he had done. Pickens wound up being drafted by Cincinnati in the second round, 31st overall. Did he slide because he walked out on the Giants' test? Who knows. But it does show that whatever you do in the pre-draft process, there's a good chance everyone in the league will know it.

Most teams interview players directly, too, generally in a hotel suite. Interviews go on all week, although teams try to get to their prime targets early in the week, before the players start to get burned out. It could be pleasant chitchat about football or school, or it could be a carefully designed series of questions that home in on a player's psyche: How important is your family? What would you do tomorrow if you



couldn't play football? Why would you like to play for us? If Regis Philbin gave you a million dollars, what would you do with it? These interviews also give the team's coach his first opportunity to spend time with a prospect.

Many interviews with players are taped and viewed later at team headquarters. This allows additional people to analyze the interview as the team tries to zero in on a player's personality, intelligence and values. Each pick is important, and teams do everything they can to make them count.

Mingling

Because practically everyone is there, Senior Bowl week is the unofficial NFL coaches convention. For out-of-work coaches, there's no better time to stump for a job. Most astute NFL owners who are making a change will try to hire their new head coach before Senior Bowl week because they know that most of the good, available coaches will be plucked by the time it's over.

The downside of the job fair is that it can be sobering and humiliating. I have sat in the hotel lobby and watched proud veteran coaches standing around in the hopes they could grab a head coach for five minutes and almost beg for work. I vowed after my first year at the Senior Bowl that I would never go to Mobile in search of a job.

For those on official business, the key events are cocktail parties on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Community leaders work the crowd, while coaches tell old war stories. Acquaintances are renewed, new friendships are forged. After the parties, individual coaching staffs or groups will go to dinner or spend a night on the town.

The social events also give coaches a relaxed setting in which to share ideas, techniques and philosophies and to discuss what's going on in the league. I saw Raiders coach Jon Gruden holding court with about 10 young coaches and scouts at a cocktail party before this year's Senior Bowl. He talked about the way the salary cap has changed the game—and he wasn't happy about it. Like most NFL coaches, Gruden is frustrated because it's virtually impossible to keep a roster together, and he can't control his own fate. Even if you do a great job evaluating players and deciding who you want, financial limitations may prohibit you from obtaining or keeping those players. Though Gruden said he loves the challenge of working with Raiders owner Al Davis, there are some days he thinks it would be fun to coach a high school team, where all you do is coach and make players better, without having to deal with politics, egos and money.

While the coaches are socializing, the players usually have a different function each evening that includes dinner. They generally return to the hotel fairly early. Some have evening interviews and many just want to get a good night's rest before another day under the microscope.

Sign on the dotted line ...

If the only people attending Senior Bowl week were players, representatives of NFL teams and fans, the hotel lobby still would be crowded. But making it absolutely packed are agents.

Most players come to the Senior Bowl with representation. Even so, a player under contract with an agent still will be besieged by as many as 50 agents as he walks through the lobby. Each one is trying to grab the player's attention and sell him on his services. As a result, agents who have clients in this game often are forced to baby-sit their players.

Some agents will go to great lengths to add to their client list. Two years ago I saw an agent handing his business cards and player representation contracts to players at the Mobile airport; he asked them to look over the contract and told them he'd be in touch. Agents will regularly slip pamphlets, brochures and even contracts under the doors of players and will call their rooms at all hours of the day and night.

Although most college coaches don't like agents, their paths usually don't cross. Agents generally aren't welcome on campus, and by the time an agent legally can enter the picture—either when the player's eligibility has expired or he has declared for early draft entry—the coach no longer has much reason to deal with the player. But I did see a rare fight between a coach and an agent in Mobile this year. An Oklahoma assistant coach was watching practice and came face to face with an agent who had been on the OU campus recruiting offensive tackle Stockar McDougle. That's a violation of NCAA rules that can get a player suspended and a program placed on probation. The two got into a shouting match, then a shoving match, and they had to be separated.

Winding down

Though the game is Saturday afternoon, most NFL coaches and scouts leave Mobile after practice Thursday afternoon. It's amazing to see how the team hotel empties out on Thursday. The light practices on Friday have little value, and the game can be watched on TV.

For fans, there's more to do late in the week than early, unless watching practice is your idea of fun. The Senior Bowl Experience—an interactive fan event with games and entertainment that is a small-scale version of the NFL Experience at the Super Bowl—is held Thursday and Friday at the Mobile Convention Center. Fans also can meet players during a 90-minute window Friday at the convention center, and the players generally make other appearances around town on Friday, such as a hospital visit. There's a Senior Bowl Hall of Fame Induction banquet Friday evening—at $40 a ticket. If you don't go to the banquet, you can enjoy a pep rally that features college bands, pro dance squads and fireworks. Mobile goes all-out to make the week fan-friendly.

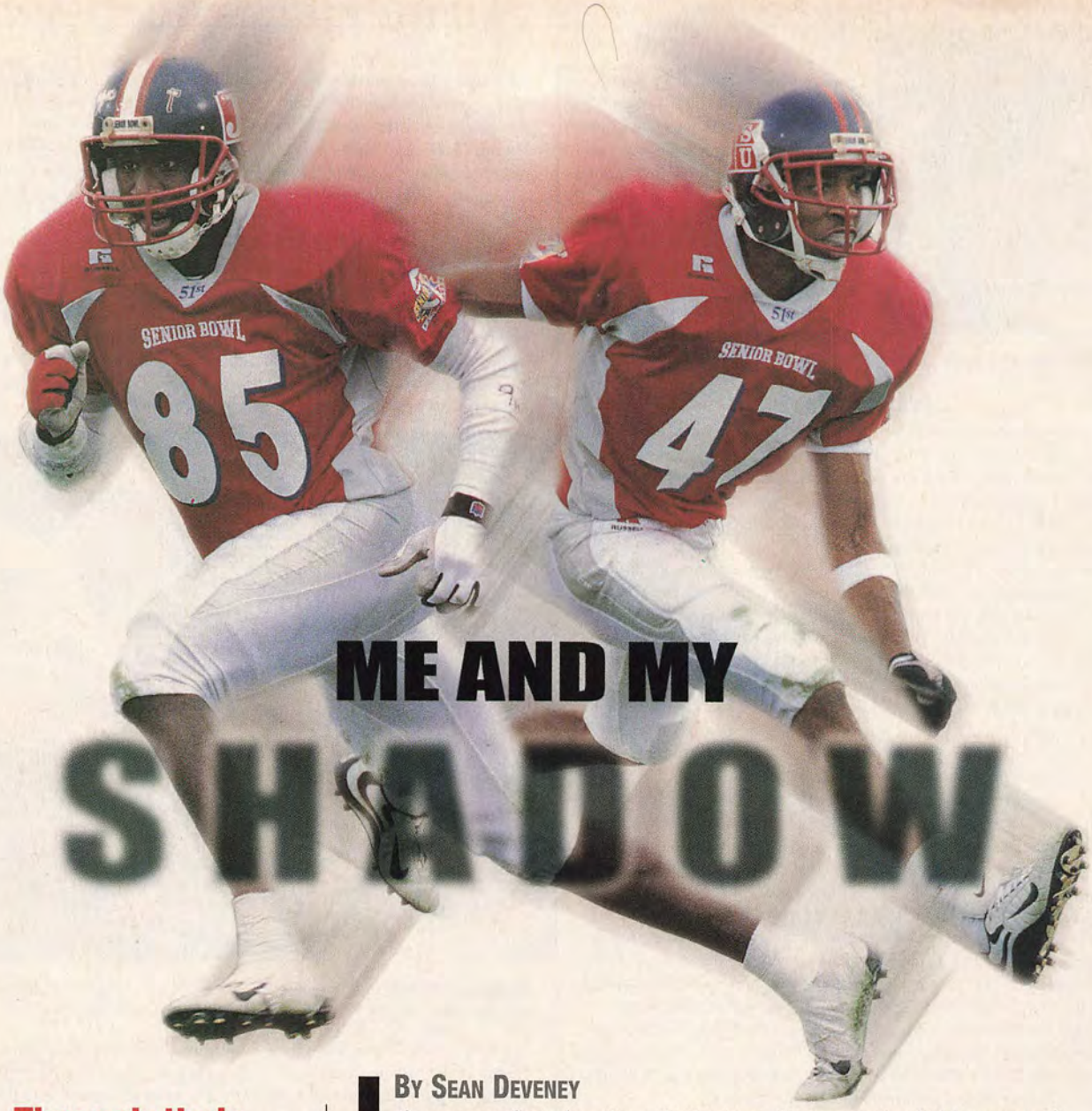
MAKING A FRIEND: *Fans have a 90-minute window on Friday to meet players. Here, Marshall quarterback Chad Pennington signs a football for a child.*

Game day features more festivities and, finally, kickoff at 1:30 p.m. The game generally is a sellout; all 40,646 seats for this year's game at Ladd-Peebles Stadium were sold a month beforehand.

The game itself doesn't really matter much. There is a longstanding NFL rule that "you never lower a player's draft status because of an all-star game performance, but you can raise it." There are so many intangibles—limited practice time, unfamiliarity with teammates, the role to which a player may be assigned and so on—that a good player may not have a great performance. Also, with 110 players on the rosters and substitutions being made constantly, it's difficult to get into a flow.

For the record, the North beat the South, 24-21, and Marshall quarterback Chad Pennington was MVP. Penn State linebacker Brandon Short, New Mexico linebacker Brian Urlacher and Arizona State back J.R. Redmond also won various awards. That was all well and good. But what really mattered—and what scouts will most remember—are what happened in practice and how each player looked in his underwear.

Former NFL scout Gary Horton is editor of The War Room, a series of periodicals that provide evaluations and ratings of NFL teams and players and college players.



DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

ME AND MY SHADOW

Through their one-on-one battles in practice, Jackson State's Sylvester Morris and Rashard Anderson emerged as NFL prospects

By Sean Deveney

It's a scene that played on the Jackson State practice field over and over last fall. It's the one where Rashard Anderson, fingers curled into open-palmed fists, plants his hands into the shoulder pads of Sylvester Morris and pushes. Morris pushes back, gets free and breaks into a sprint. Anderson turns his hips and runs alongside. Their four cleats flip bits of grass and turf in their wake as they tread down the sideline, step for step.

It's practice for the Tigers, and while coach Robert Hughes keeps an eye on the plays his team is working on, he also likes to keep an eye on Morris, his record-setting receiver, and Anderson, a cornerback who saw little action in his senior season because teams refused to throw his way. Play after play, the two are interlocked.

Hughes describes the Morris-Anderson sideshow not as a coach, but as a man who loves football. And why not? They are two of the nation's best at their positions and have climbed the NFL draft charts despite playing for the low-profile, Division I-AA Tigers. Both could wind up being first-round picks, and they owe it to each other.

"Every day," Hughes says. "It's a battle with those two, no matter what we're working on. Mmmm, something to see. That was fun. They fought and fought. They made each other better players."

"I worked to beat him and he worked to beat me," Morris says. "He's one of the best there is, and it helps to play against the best."

Under helmets and shoulder pads, Morris and Anderson look alike. Both are 6-3 and slightly over 200 pounds, with long arms and legs—physical attributes that draw immediate notice from scouts. But it was at those Jackson State practices conducted in front of no one under a blanket of Mississippi heat that Morris and Anderson developed those attributes.

"They're exceptional athletes, both of them," says Ravens college scouting director Phil Savage. "They're guys who have developed quickly in the last few years, and a lot of teams are excited about their NFL futures."

Morris and Anderson have taken jagged paths to the brink of the NFL. Morris did not play football until his senior year in high school, and that was as a 170-pound tight end for McDonogh 35 in New Orleans. He caught just 13 passes for a team that went 0-10. He was planning to walk on at Southern University before Jackson State offered a scholarship.

Anderson was a 190-pound outside linebacker at Forest (Miss.) High School, with an enrollment of 406. He was overshadowed in high school by receiver Todd Pinkston (Southern Mississippi) and cornerback Anthony Derricks (Mississippi State). He wanted to go to Southern Miss, but he didn't have a position—too small to be a linebacker and too slow to be a defensive back. The Eagles weren't interested after learning Jackson was a partial qualifier, but Jackson State offered a scholarship.

Anderson and Morris have spent their college careers in obscurity. Jackson State plays in the Southwestern Athletic Conference. But the school has a history of supplying NFL players—Walter Payton, Lem Barney, Jackie Slater, Robert Brazile, Willie Richardson (whose school records were broken by Morris) and Jimmy Smith, for instance—and NFL scouts have long known about Morris and Anderson.

"We all know about those two guys, and we've known about them for a couple of years," Savage says. "Few guys come out of nowhere anymore. You have to catch the ball at Jackson State just like you do at Arkansas or Florida State, so we look at Jackson State, too."

But the competition level tends to be lower in I-AA, and in the draft that might actually be a positive for Anderson and Morris. After Florida State's Peter Warrick, the most highly regarded receivers are Florida's Travis Taylor, Georgia Tech's Dez White, Michigan State's Plaxico Burress—and Morris. Scouts already have seen Taylor, White and Burress against the best; they know what to expect. With Morris, as with Anderson, there is a bit of uncertainty, and a team willing to take a chance might be rewarded.

Anderson and Morris had a chance to show they fit in with the nation's best in the Senior Bowl. Though neither had a great game, they both did well in the week of workouts leading up to the game.

Morris ran a 4.41 in the 40, and has been timed as low as 4.26. His height is an obvious asset, but his long legs help as well. He takes the type of sturdy strides that allow him to separate from defenders over the middle. He is strong, plays physically and is able to release from tight coverage on the line, thanks to those repetitions in practice against Anderson. For all his physical skill, though, his hands are what set him apart. With Morris, catching is instinctual.

"He's got as good hands as anyone in the draft," says one NFC scouting director. "He's a big guy and he goes all out to make a catch."

Anderson, once too slow to be a I-A cornerback, now runs a 4.5 in the 40. He is taller than most cornerbacks, and as the NFL's receivers continue to get bigger, a guy such as Anderson becomes a necessity.

"He's big," Savage says. "He can match up with a big receiver and counter what other people are trying to do offensively."

Like Morris, Anderson is physical and plays well in bump-and-run coverage. He is a vocal leader with good technique and a lot of confidence. He can be too aggressive at times, getting caught out of position and biting on fakes, but those mistakes can be worked out with more coaching.

"He's one of the better cornerbacks to come out in a while," says the NFC scouting director. "He has natural cover skills. He's a great hitter, an old-timer like Mel Blount."

Anderson could be the second or third cornerback selected; Morris could be the third or fourth receiver. Whichever teams select them will be looking to make an investment, and it may take a little extra coaching to polish Morris and Anderson. They may be a bit behind the curve in terms of the competition they've faced, but both have the skill to play in the NFL and have gotten good coaching at Jackson State.

"It's going to take some adapting," Savage says. "But they'll be rookies, and it's hard for any rookie. They'll have a lot of learning to do. I would be surprised to see them come to a team and get into the lineup right away."

Eventually, though, Morris and Anderson could add to Jackson State's list of NFL stars.

"We're looking for people to be productive in our uniform," says the NFC scouting director. "We don't care about the last uniform they wore. These two will be productive players in the NFL."

"I'd say we'll just go out and do the best we can do," Morris says. "I've had some good years at Jackson State. I learned a lot. Now, I'll go in with my eyes open and ready to learn more, whatever I can." **TSN**

Sean Deveney is an associate editor for The Sporting News.

SLEEPERS

Doug Chapman, RB, Marshall
This skilled runner has many talents that excite coaches and scouts. With teams moving toward wide-open, one-back systems, Chapman's experience as a receiver out of the backfield and his speed in the open field will work to his advantage.

Jerry DeLoach, DT, California
He's difficult to rate because he has dominating inside skills but lacks a feel for making plays and takes poor angles as a tackler. DeLoach may get selected as high as the third round or as low as the seventh because of his inconsistency as a pursuit player.

Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila, DE, San Diego State
Gbaja-Biamila is floating up and down draft charts because he's a 'tweener. He lacks bulk and strength to match up as a lineman against the run and has limited experience at outside linebacker and will struggle in coverage. However, if you're looking for good character, Gbaja-Biamila is your man.

Ronney Jenkins, RB, Northern Arizona
Forced to leave BYU due to honor-code violations, Jenkins transferred to Division I-AA, where he wouldn't have to sit out a year. Even though scouts question his discipline, Jenkins has proved to be an upstanding citizen and shown character throughout his transition. Jenkins is only a mid-round prospect whose size will limit him to a third-down role, but he shows big-play potential and should develop into a threat as a receiver out of the backfield because of his proven hands and excellent agility in the open field.

Kareem Larrimore, CB, West Texas A&M
Not many players from Division II get a serious look, but Larrimore's athleticism and cover skills are hard to ignore. Larrimore, a transfer from Cerritos Junior College (Calif.), answered a lot of questions with his impressive performance in one-on-one drills during the practice week at the Senior Bowl.

Al Lucas, DT, Troy State
Lucas' dominance at the I-AA level has earned him a lot of serious looks. He has drawn comparisons to former Bear William "Refrigerator" Perry, not only because of his looming presence but because of his contributions as a short-yardage ballcarrier. Lucas is an exciting athlete because he's an active playmaker against the run. Scouts' main concern with Lucas is that he never has matched up against the type of size and speed he'll face in the NFL. It likely will take him a year to develop.

Jerry Porter, WR, West Virginia
Porter switched from defense, where he was a dominating safety, to offense his senior year. He is perhaps the biggest unknown in the draft because he flashes so much raw potential, but his lack of experience as a wideout will cost the team that drafts him at least a year of development. Porter's size and impressive stride excite scouts, and his breakout performance in the East-West Shrine Game proved he has the talent to compete against top athletes.

Aaron Shea, FB, Michigan
Making the transition from tight end to fullback as a senior was a smart decision. Shea has become a competent isolation blocker with enough adjustment on the move to contribute now as an every-down player. Shea's hands and skills as a route runner should improve his status because of an increasing need for receivers out of the backfield. *—The War Room*

TSN Draft Guide Presents:

MOCK DRAFT 2000

The War Room maps out the first round of the NFL draft

TEAM — 1999 RECORD

1. Cleveland — 2-14
Peter Warrick, WR, senior, Florida State

The trio of QB Tim Couch, WR Kevin Johnson and Warrick would give the Browns legitimate explosiveness on offense, and Warrick also could give them a huge boost in the return game. The Browns might float feelers for trading down to acquire more picks, and they might contemplate one of two defensive players, OLB LaVar Arrington or DE Courtney Brown, but it is unlikely that another team will trade into the No. 1 spot. Warrick is the closest thing to a franchise player in this draft and would be a popular pick in Cleveland.

2. Washington (from New Orleans) — 10-6
LaVar Arrington, OLB, junior, Penn State

The Redskins, thanks to trades with New Orleans and San Francisco, own the Nos. 2 and 3 picks, and logic dictates they will use them to shore up their defense. They need speed and athleticism off the edge, and back-to-back picks of Penn State teammates Arrington and Courtney Brown will be hard to resist. Arrington is a complete linebacker who can rush or drop into coverage. This is a need pick with value to match.

3. Washington (from San Francisco) — 10-6
Courtney Brown, DE, senior, Penn State

Brown is a complete player who can instantly upgrade a line that gives up too much on the ground. But the Redskins also could opt for Alabama OT Chris Samuels, who could further upgrade an already-potent offense. Either way, the Redskins will prosper.

4. Cincinnati — 4-12
Corey Simon, DT, senior, Florida State

As tempting as a running back might be, the Bengals will be hard-pressed to ignore Simon, the better value as the No. 4 overall pick of the draft. They have significant holes on defense and a gradual switch to the 4-3 would make Simon a perfect fit as an inside pass-rush threat who could give the ailing secondary needed support.

5. Baltimore (from Atlanta) — 8-8
Thomas Jones, RB, senior, Virginia

With Shannon Sharpe and Tony Banks locked into contracts, the Ravens will try to surround them with a good supporting cast. Jones will fill the void created by the departure of Errict Rhett. Jones has emerged as the top running back of this draft, and running behind an underrated offensive line, his transition to premier NFL runner should be smooth.

6. Philadelphia — 5-11
Plaxico Burress, WR, junior, Michigan State

The Eagles need an inside pass rusher, but with Corey Simon likely gone they should switch their attention to wide receiver. Burress might lack polish, but he is a proven playmaker with Randy Moss-like potential to make a long-term impact. He will provide a nice weapon for QB Donovan McNabb.

7. Arizona — 6-10
Shaun Alexander, RB, senior, Alabama

The Cardinals are in serious need of a big-time back to take pressure off QB Jake Plummer. Alexander would give them a legitimate 25-carry, 100 yards-per-game rusher—which they have been missing for years. If Alexander is there, this would seem to be a no-brainer.

8. Pittsburgh — 6-10
Chris Samuels, OT, senior, Alabama

The Steelers' offensive line was a 1999 disappointment and Samuels projects as the draft's top lineman. He's also a franchise left tackle who can eliminate pressure from the backside well into the new decade.

9. Chicago — 6-10
Brian Urlacher, OLB, senior, New Mexico

Urlacher may be one of the most versatile athletes in this draft. He has the range of a safety and the size of a linebacker, and he would dramatically upgrade a Chicago defense filled with overachievers. He would be an every-down player because he also fits the bill as a nickel linebacker.

10. Denver — 6-10
Deon Grant, S, junior, Tennessee

The Broncos, having addressed their defensive line needs via free agency, will go for an athletic safety from a solid college program. Grant is a ballhawking center fielder with plenty of speed and the ability to help the Broncos cut back on a penchant for allowing big plays.

11. New York Giants — 7-9
Ron Dayne, RB, senior, Wisconsin

Dayne is a perfect fit for a team that needs a back who can pound the ball. There are concerns; Dayne took a lot of hits in college and he lacks breakaway speed. But he is a proven load-carrier who will give this offense an instant upgrade.

12. San Francisco (from Washington) — 4-12
Chad Pennington, QB, senior, Marshall

The 49ers, who traded down from No. 3, will grab a young quarterback they can groom in a rebuilding situation. Pennington, a good ballhandler with arm strength, is an intelligent choice as long as the 49ers don't force him into a starting job as a rookie.

13. Tampa Bay (from San Diego) — 11-5
Stockar McDougle, OT, senior, Oklahoma

McDougle may be the fastest-rising offensive lineman in this draft. He

TEAM 1999 RECORD

has size, feet and instincts. With LT Paul Gruber near the end of the line, McDougle would be an excellent guy to work into the Bucs' lineup. It may take him a year to adjust, but he will be an excellent pro player.

14. Green Bay 8-8
Shaun Ellis, DE, senior, Tennessee

The aging Packers could go in a lot of directions, but they need to improve their speed and pass-rush ability off the edge and Ellis is a perfect fit. He has great speed, quickness and intensity and can be a double-digit sack artist in the right system.

15. Baltimore 8-8
Chris Redman, QB, senior, Louisville

Redman might be a stretch at No. 14, especially with the signing of Tony Banks to a long-term contract. But the Ravens will use their second first-round pick to draft a future need and give him time to develop.

16. New York Jets (from New England) 8-8
Bubba Franks, TE, junior, Miami (Fla.)

The Jets are desperate for a big-play tight end who can stretch a defense in the passing game, and Franks would quickly become a favorite target of QB Vinny Testaverde. With the Jets already solid at wide receiver, Franks would round out a versatile passing package.

17. Oakland 8-8
Travis Taylor, WR, junior, Florida

With an aging Tim Brown and an inconsistent James Jett, the Raiders need significant help in their vertical passing game. Taylor has size and speed, and is a product of a sophisticated college passing offense. He has tremendous potential and would become QB Rich Gannon's new best friend.

18. New York Jets 8-8
John Engelberger, DE, senior, Virginia Tech

The Jets have one of the worst pass-rush groups in the NFL. They could use a speed rusher as well as a guy who can hold up against the run, a job description that fits Engelberger's skills. He is a solid, blue-collar player and would upgrade a Jets defense sorely in need of big plays.

19. Seattle (from Dallas) 9-7
Sylvester Morris, WR, senior, Jackson State

The trade of Joey Galloway to Dallas gives the Seahawks a wide receiver void and an extra first-round pick. Morris is a playmaker with excellent size and speed—the type of receiver who can provide an offensive spark.

20. Detroit 8-8
Chris McIntosh, OT, senior, Wisconsin

With the signing of free-agent back James Stewart, the Lions will beef up the line to provide him running room. McIntosh is a right tackle prospect who can be powerful on the run block but lacks the feet to play on the left side.

21. Kansas City 9-7
Ahmed Plummer, CB, senior, Ohio State

The Chiefs are starting to age at cornerback. They need a cover corner who can take away the opponent's best wide receiver, and Plummer may fit the bill. He has great man-to-man skills and should be able to run with the talented receivers in the AFC West.

22. Seattle 9-7
Raynoch Thompson, LB, senior, Tennessee

The Seahawks are without a lot of serious needs, but they could use an athletic linebacker who could play in both cover and blitz situations. Darrin Smith is replaceable at one outside linebacker spot. Thompson is a big-play guy who may fit into the best-athlete-available mold.

TEAM 1999 RECORD

23. Carolina (from Miami) 8-8
Cosey Coleman, G, junior, Tennessee

Coleman is a dominating inside run blocker who could help the Panthers' offense take a step to the next level. He's not flashy, but he's a consistent playmaker who will shore up an unimpressive interior line. Coleman clearly is the top guard in the draft and his protection skills also should help an air attack that showed promise last season.

24. San Francisco (from Washington) 4-12
Darren Howard, DE, senior, Kansas State

Having addressed their quarterback need, look for the 49ers to select the best athlete on the defensive side. Howard established himself last season as a player who can double as a dominant pass rusher and an anchor against the run. He should be an every-down performer.

25. Minnesota 10-6
Rashard Anderson, CB, senior, Jackson State

The Vikings need an impact corner but do not have the ammunition to move up in the draft. Anderson, who has great raw skills but will need a lot of refinement, may be the perfect fit. Even if Ohio State's Ahmed Plummer or Tennessee's Dwayne Goodrich falls to this spot, look for the Vikings to take Anderson. He is the lesser player now, but he has greater upside.

26. Buffalo 11-5
Dwayne Goodrich, CB, senior, Tennessee

Goodrich fits the bill as the best player available while also filling a need. He has lots of natural talent, but he gambles a lot and tends to give up the big play. The Bills are confident they can mold his natural talents and develop him into an "island player" opposite Antoine Winfield.

27. Tampa Bay 11-5
Ron Dugans, WR, senior, Florida State

The Bucs definitely have their eyes on a wide receiver in the first round. The big question will be if it comes at No. 13 or No. 27. They simply are not getting big plays at the wide receiver position, and Dugans, who is sneaking up the draft charts, can give their offense a spark.

28. Indianapolis 13-3
Rob Morris, MLB, senior, Brigham Young

With the Colts looking for help in the middle of their defense, Morris is a perfect fit. He has the strength and athleticism to match up well inside and he has the intensity to make an NFL impact for years to come.

29. Jacksonville 14-2
Julian Peterson, OLB, senior, Michigan State

With free agent Hardy Nickerson ready to fill the middle spot, the Jaguars take the best-athlete-available route with Peterson, who showed great flashes as a pass rusher in college. With so much talent in Jacksonville's defensive unit, he will get the time needed to develop.

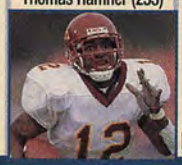
30. Tennessee 13-3
Dez White, WR, junior, Georgia Tech

White should fill the Titans' need for a speed receiver who can help diversify the offense. White also possesses the size to create mismatches against some of the league's smaller cornerbacks.

31. St. Louis 13-3
Marvel Smith, OT, junior, Arizona State

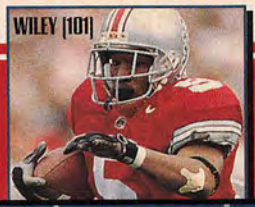
The defending champions have taken a free-agent hit on the offensive line, creating a need to patch some serious holes. Smith might be a first-round stretch, but he shows a lot of potential. He has good feet and the strength to become an offensive line mainstay for a long time.

STACKING THE BOARD

	QB	RB	FB	WR	TE	OT	OG	OC
1st ROUND	Chad Pennington (21) Chris Redman (45) REDMAN [45]	Thomas Jones (8) Shaun Alexander (13) Ron Dayne (18)		Peter Warrick (1) Travis Taylor (10) Plaxico Burress (16) Dez White (20) Laveranues Coles (22) Sylvester Morris (29)	Bubba Franks (6)	Chris Samuels (2) S. McDougle (12) Chris McIntosh (33)	Cosey Coleman (7)	
2nd ROUND	Marc Bulger (80) G. Carmazzi (82)	Jamal Lewis (43) Travis Prentice (66) J.R. Redmond (69) Reuben Droughns (91) Michael Wiley (101)	Deon Dyer (44)	R. Jay Soward (32) Ron Dugans (40) Kwame Cavil (54) Darrell Jackson (59)	Anthony Becht (65)	Darnell Alford (36) Adrian Klemm (38) Marvel Smith (46) Todd Wade (52)	Kaulana Noa (19) Travis Claridge (30) Damion McIntosh (55) Richard Mercier (57)	John St. Clair (37)
3rd ROUND	Tom Brady (123) Tee Martin (146) MARTIN [146]	Rondell Mealey (112) C. Chukwuma (113) Sammy Morris (129) Demario Brown (139)	Matt Keller (125) Aaron Shea (143) Durrell Price (163)	Sherrod Gideon (67) Danny Farmer (73) FARMER [73]	J. D. Davenport (103) Erron Kinney (119) Casey Crawford (152)	Chad Clifton (70) Bobby Williams (75) Jonathan Gray (94) GRAY [94]	Leander Jordan (72) Brad Bedell (83) Tutan Reyes (86)	Matt O'Neal (126)
4th ROUND	Tim Rattay (164)	Trung Canidate (147) Doug Chapman (157) Mike Anderson (186) Curtis Keaton (206) Kevin McDougal (214)	Terrelle Smith (183) Aaron Harris (187)	Dennis Northcutt (93) Anthony Lucas (98) Mareno Philyaw (105) Gari Scott (106) Jerry Porter (124)	Austin Wheatley (173)	G. Robin.-Randall (95) Wes Shivers (118) Mark Baniewicz (144) BANIEWICZ [144]	R. Johanningmeier (99) N. LaMontagne (107) Manuia Savea (108) Jeno James (109)	Rob Riti (158)
5th ROUND	Joe Hamilton (176) Todd Husak (196)	Ronney Jenkins (243) Derrick Foster (245) Thomas Hamner (253)  HAMNER [253]	Paul Smith (211) Mondriel Fulcher (212)	Damon Gourdine (149) Todd Pinkston (165) James Williams (166) Troy Walters (189) W. Montgomery (197) Cory Peterson (200)	Ibn Green (202) Zeron Flemister (208) Dave Stachelski (220)	M. Thompson (150) Joey Chustz (179) John Blick (190) BLICK [190]	Mark Tauscher (122) Ben Gilbert (141) Steve Estes (160) Roger Roesler (169) Al Jackson (178)	
6th ROUND	Kevin Feterik (244) Leon Murray (269) Billy Volek (282) FETERIK [244]	Darren Davis (262) Rashon Spikes (267) Dante Hall (271)	Mike Green (232) Dan Kendra (241) Joey Goodspeed (264)	Trevor Insley (203) Chafie Fields (215) Trevor Gaylor (222) Chris Coleman (223) Q. Spotwood (224) S. Buchanan (226) Chris Cole (240) Windrell Hayes (242)	T. McCaskey (257) Carlos Nuno (273)	Jeff Pilon (219) Chase Raynock (228) Joe Hattendorf (229) Allen Mogridge (234)	Adam Davis (191) DAVIS [191]	Blane Saipaia (90) Kurt Murphy (204) Brad Meester (230) John Romero (249)
7th ROUND	Doug Johnson (284) Keith Smith (289) Spergon Wynn (290)	Chad Morton (280) Anthony White (283) Destry Wright (286)	T. Witherspoon (272)	Marcus Knight (251) Marcus Stiggers (279) Matt Farmer (285)	Jay Tant (277) Joe Kavanaugh (287)	Jim Stull (247) Damon Nivens (258) Shane Cook (266) Robert Skapura (268) Tim Leach (270)	Jason Thomas (227)	Doug Dorley (255) Mike Malano (256) Seneca Gray (265) Chad Deal (274) Shaun O'Hara (281)

PHOTOS BY ALBERT DICKSON, JOHN DUNN, BOB LEVERONE, ED NESSEN, PAUL NISELY, ROBERT SEALE, DILIP VISHWANAT AND JASON WISE FOR TSN

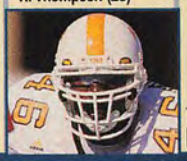
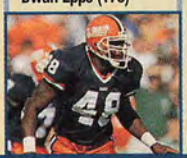
The War Room shows, round by round, where each player should be drafted based solely on his value. The number in parentheses represents the player's overall ranking among all prospects, regardless of position. The numbers sometimes disagree with the round because of the overall strength of this draft.

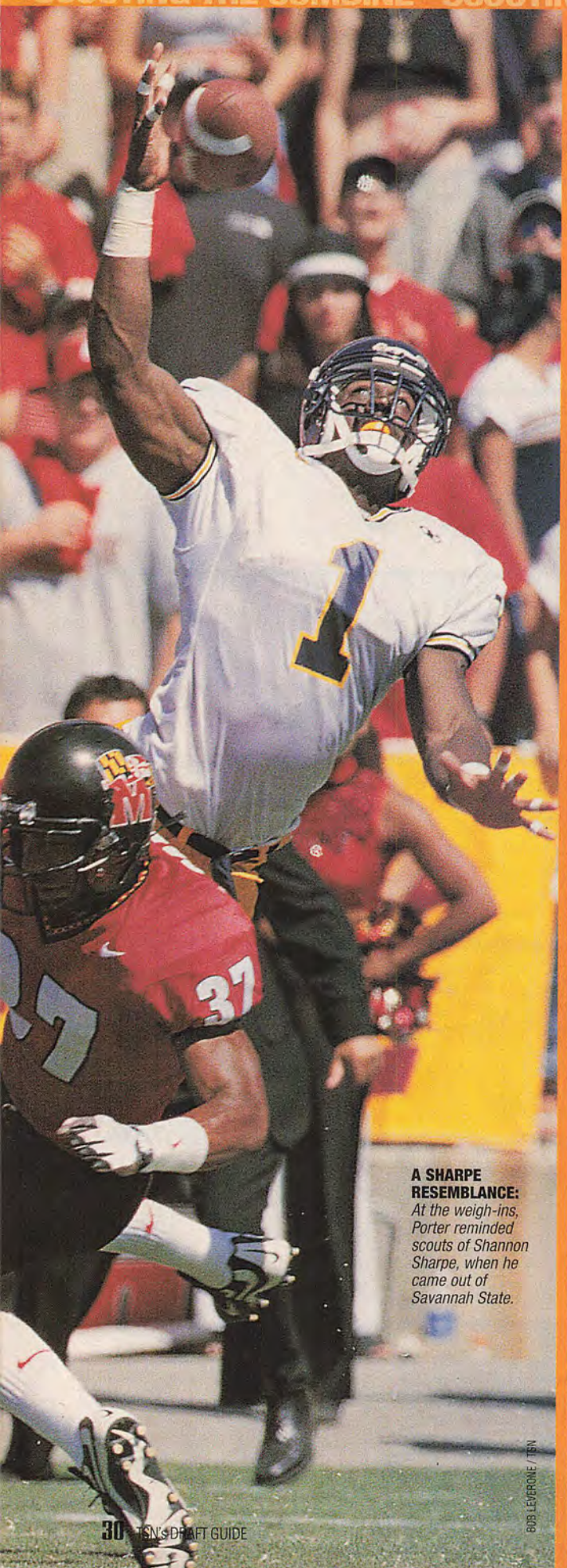


BOB LEVERONE / TSN

JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

ED MESSEN / TSN

DE	DT	ILB/MLB	OLB	CB	S	K	P
Courtney Brown (5) Shaun Ellis (27) John Engelberger (29) Darren Howard (35)	Corey Simon (4) Darwin Walker (23) Chris Hovan (26)	Rob Morris (14) Brandon Short (34)	LaVar Arrington (3) Brian Urlacher (11) R. Thompson (25)	Ahmed Plummer (15) Dwayne Goodrich (17) Rashard Anderson (24)	Deon Grant (9)		
	WALKER (23)		 THOMPSON (25)				
John Abraham (51) Adalius Thomas (58)	Jerry Johnson (31)	Marcus Bell (43) Mark Simoneau (50)	Keith Bulluck (39) Na'il Diggs (45) Julian Peterson (48)	Mario Edwards (41) Deltha O'Neal (47) Lewis Sanders (56) Ike Charlton (64)	Barrett Green (42) Mike Brown (53)	S. Janikowski (78)	
	SIMONEAU (50)		SANDERS (56)				
Mao Tosi (74) Cornelius Griffin (89)	Steve Warren (49) Jabari Issa (60) Junior Ioane (62) Kendrick Clancy (87)	Peter Sirmon (68) Matt Beck (76) Jeff Ulbrich (85)	Sekou Sanyika (61) Corey Moore (79) Erik Flowers (84)	Lloyd Harrison (97)	Travares Tillman (63) Ashley Cooper (71) Rogers Beckett (77) Gary Berry (81) Mark Roman (88)		
	ISSA (60)						
Byron Frisch (100) L. Carson (115) John Frank (120)	Robert Brannon (104) Fred Robbins (117)	T.J. Slaughter (102) Dustin Lyman (135) Lester Towns (140)	Antonio Wilson (92) Ali Abdul Azziz (111) DaShon Polk (114)	Lamar Chapman (110) Ben Kelly (116) David Macklin (119)	Arturo Freeman (96)		Shane Lechler (133)
	SMITH (148)						LECHLER (133)
A. Ogunleye (145) Robaire Smith (148) Brian Young (170) K. Gbaja-Biamila (172) Clark Haggans (181)	Nat Williams (134) Chris Combs (138) Al Lucas (142) Earnest Grant (151)	Keith Kelsey (153) Danny Clark (155) Dwan Epps (175)	Julius Jackson (121) Tramont Lawless (127) Fred Jones (131)	Brian Gray (128) Ralph Brown (130) Hank Poteat (156) Kareem Larrimore (161)	Aric Morris (132) Pedro Cirino (136) Sean Key (137) Kenoy Kennedy (162)		
			CLARK (155)				
James Hall (192) H. Thompson (193) Aaron Humphrey (194)	Jerry DeLoach (167) Alvin McKinley (180)	F. Chamberlin (184)	Ian Gold (154) Cedric Pittman (159) Dhani Jones (174) Dustin Cohen (182)	M. Hawthorne (171) Robert Bean (188)	Dwyte Smiley (168) Rashidi Barnes (177) Tyrone Carter (185)	Paul Edinger (221)	
	HUMPHREY (194)						
Travis Griffith (195) Quinton Reese (201) Rameel Connor (207) Aaron Fields (231) Dwight Johnson (233)	Keith Jackson (205) Sherrod Peace (218) Jeffrey Dunlap (246)	J. Jackson (199) Willie Fells (250) S. Zimmerman (261) I. Kacyvenski (276)	Tim Smith (198) Jack Golden (213) Chris Edwards (235) Corey Atkins (238)	David Barrett (210) Jason Webster (217) David Byrd (248) Sedrick Curry (252) Reggie Austin (260) Terrance Parrish (263) Todd Franz (278)	Matt Bowen (209) George White (216) T. Hendricks (226) Pete Destefano (237) Deke Cooper (239) Tinker Keck (259) William Bartee (275)	Shayne Graham (288) Jason Strasser (291)	Andrew Bayes (225) Brian Schmitz (254)



A SHARPE RESEMBLANCE: *At the weigh-ins, Porter reminded scouts of Shannon Sharpe, when he came out of Savannah State.*

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

SCOUTI

Updates on rising and falling stock from testing in Indianapolis in late February

By The War Room

Stopwatches were reset. Footwork was analyzed. Body composition was dissected. After four days of intensive scrutiny inside the RCA Dome in late February, the most glorified cattle call in America left some strong impressions on NFL personnel. The draft class of 2000 displayed plenty of skilled wide receivers but few quarterbacks to get them the ball; a wealth of offensive tackles but not enough interior hogs; some impressive athletes at outside linebacker but little size inside; and a logjam of edge rushers in a group of defensive ends devoid of many every-down players.

Like most every other year, the NFL Scouting Combine had its clear winners and losers, surprises and confirmations. What this group lacks in star power, it makes up for in depth. Teams looking to add one or two impact players, such as Jacksonville, won't be as satisfied as clubs simply in need of fresh bodies, such as San Francisco. Here is a look at how each position broke down through the eyes of various NFL staffers:

NG THE COMBINE

QUARTERBACK

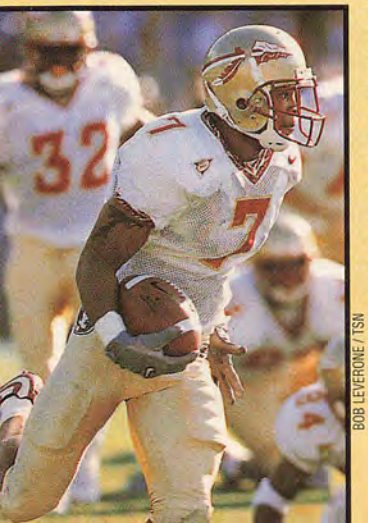
This is quickly becoming the weakest area in the draft. With errant balls sailing around the dome, workouts were well below the standards established in previous years. It's conceivable—unless a team reaches—that a quarterback won't be selected in the first round. ... Marshall's **Chad Pennington** defied conventional wisdom by running the 40-yard dash (4.86 seconds) but declining to participate in passing drills. Pennington moved fairly well, but his decision not to throw has teams wondering if he has something to hide. ... **Chris Redman**, Louisville's strong-armed quarterback, took a huge hit when he was clocked at 5.35 in the 40. Redman's slow time raised big questions about his ability to move around in the pocket and break containment when pressured. ... Hofstra's **Giovanni Carmazzi** and Tennessee's **Tee Martin** had comparable workouts. Both had 40 times in the 4.7-4.8 range but were erratic with the football. ... The disastrous offseason of Louisiana Tech's **Tim Rattay** continued in Indianapolis. On the heels of a subpar Senior Bowl workout, Rattay again appeared tight. His stock has dropped considerably over the past two months. ... An obscure player who turned some heads was **Spergon Wynn**. The Southwest Texas State standout was labeled "Little Daunte" by some scouts, a reference to Wynn's imposing physical stature (which seemed similar to that of Daunte Culpepper, a first-round pick of the Vikings in 1999). Because of his tremendous arm strength, Wynn will be coveted by many teams as a developmental player.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

LIMITED LATERALLY: *Canidate ran a sub-4.4 40, but did no other work because of an ankle injury.*

RUNNING BACK

It was no surprise that Virginia's **Thomas Jones**, Alabama's **Shaun Alexander**, Tennessee's **Jamal Lewis** and Heisman Trophy winner **Ron Dayne** of Wisconsin opted out of the physical tests. While the draft's top four backs sat out, Arizona's **Trung Canidate** and James Madison sleeper **Curtis Keaton** impressed with sub-4.4 times. Canidate limited his work to the 40 because of an ankle injury that hampered his lateral movement. Coming off a disappointing senior season, an impressive showing is exactly what he needed to get back in the mix. Keaton, who transferred from West Virginia after he was unable to beat out Amos Zereoue (now with the Steelers), displayed rare explosion with a 41-inch vertical jump. ... Miami (Ohio) standout **Travis Prentice**, who went through every test except the 40, looked more comfortable in drills than he did at the Senior Bowl. ... Arizona State speedster **J.R. Redmond** miffed many coaches by skipping the workout portion of the event. Redmond isn't considered a first-round talent by most clubs, and that decision could backfire on him. ... Marshall scatback **Doug Chapman** is a guy to watch on draft day. Chapman has the feet and burst that teams desire, and he's inching up many draft boards. ... After a strong showing at the Senior Bowl, Oregon's **Reuben Droughns** didn't post the times that people expected. Aside from the 40, Droughns performed well—but the marginal speed will pigeonhole him as a third-down back.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

SIGNS OF RUST: *Coles ran well, but he dropped too many passes.*

WIDE RECEIVER

Peter Warrick and **Plaxico Burress** were attention-getters in their interviews—but for different reasons. Warrick impressed a roomful of Cleveland Browns coaches, but Burress put off many teams with an aloof and arrogant attitude, confirming poor reports from his coaches at Michigan State. Burress also was sloppy in his routes, hardly resembling a top-10 pick. When Browns coach Chris Palmer asked Warrick if he'd like to play in Cleveland, the Sugar Bowl MVP shot back, "No ... I'd love to." Neither Warrick nor Burress chose to run. ... Many scouts saw a striking resemblance between West Virginia's **Jerry Porter** and perennial Pro Bowl tight end Shannon Sharpe. At weigh-ins, Porter's body reminded scouts and coaches of Sharpe when he came out of Savannah State. ... Troubled Florida State player **Laveranues Coles** was particularly busy—this was the first opportunity many teams had to meet with him. Coles ran well, as expected, but he dropped far too many passes. The rust was apparent. ... Florida juniors **Travis Taylor** and **Darrell Jackson** were two of the strongest route runners, and both came across well in interviews. Jackson suffered a sprained ankle in drills and will need to run a good time in his workout in Gainesville. ... Arizona's **Dennis Northcutt**, who helped himself with clockings in the 4.4 range, also worked out with the defensive backs. Northcutt saw limited time in the secondary as a senior and could be a better fit there because of his lack of size. ... Jackson State's **Sylvester Morris**, considered a first-round sleeper, hurt himself with a 4.65 in the 40. ... **R. Jay Soward** of USC counted aloud as he ran the 40, compounding the perception that he needs to be the center of attention. Few teams seem willing to baby-sit Soward. ... Florida State's **Ron Dugans** is widely considered the most polished receiver in this group. Dugans didn't run the 40, but many scouts expect him to climb into the first round if he posts a fast time in his individual workouts. ... **Chris Coleman**, Torry Holt's understudy last season at North Carolina State, notched times in the 4.3 range, erasing some of the negative views from his Senior Bowl performance.

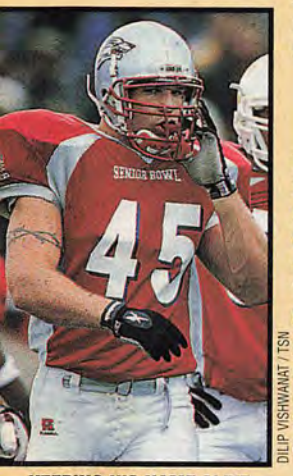
TIGHT END

This is one of the best groups in the past decade, but few of the top players worked out. **Bubba Franks** of Miami (Fla.), Florida's **Erron Kinney** (citing an Achilles' tendon injury) and Virginia's **Casey Crawford** were among the non-participants. ... West Virginia's **Anthony Becht**

didn't run but was outstanding in drills. Scouts were impressed with his pass-catching ability. ... **Joe Dean Davenport** of Arkansas suffered a tremendous drop-off after a solid Senior Bowl showing. Scouts thought Davenport, who ran a 5.11 in the 40, looked uninterested. ... Two players who helped themselves significantly were **John Jones** of Indiana (Pa.) and **Jeff Ulbrich** of Hawaii. Jones is raw, but he ran the fastest time (4.59). And Ulbrich was clocked at 4.65.

OFFENSIVE LINE

This is a fairly strong and athletic crop, dominated by **Chris Samuels** (Alabama), **Stockar McDougle** (Oklahoma) and **Chris McIntosh** (Wisconsin)—all of whom chose not to participate in workouts. Perhaps the most shocking revelation at the combine was Samuels' weight gain—from 289 pounds at the Senior Bowl to 325. Conversely, McDougle was at 361 pounds, only five more than at the Senior Bowl, and scouts were impressed by the way he carried the weight. ... One player who did participate, Northern Iowa's **Brad Meester**, may have moved himself into the first three rounds. ... The top-rated guard in the draft, Tennessee junior **Cosey Coleman**, looked smooth at the outset but labored in the later drills because of poor conditioning. ... Tennessee State's **Michael Thompson** followed up a strong Senior Bowl showing with another strong effort. He impressed teams with his intensity. ... **Leander Jordan** of Indiana (Pa.) kept his name near the top of most draft boards. He moved better than expected. ... Oklahoma State's **Adam Davis**, considered by most a late-round pick or an eventual free-agent signee, displayed great toughness by finishing his workout despite straining his groin in the 40. Such grit endears a player to coaches.



DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

KEEPING HIS NAME ALIVE: *Urlacher's stock rose because offensive linemen remembered him.*

DEFENSIVE LINE

This group wasn't as strong as anticipated because some edge rush-types worked out with the linebackers. ... As expected, such top players as Penn State's **Courtney Brown** and Florida State's **Corey Simon** didn't work out. Inexplicably, though, they were joined by lesser talents, such as Tennessee's **Shaun Ellis** and Michigan State's **Robaire Smith**. ... One big name who did participate, Boston College's **Chris Hovan**, showed strong intensity and a good burst. Hovan's 4.96 time might have solidified a spot in the first round. ... Southern Mississippi rush end **Adalius Thomas** clocked a blazing 4.56 and 4.59. He also worked with the linebackers. ... Texas-El Paso's **Leif Larsen** set a combine record with 45 reps at 225 pounds on the bench press, but teams still question his instincts for the game. ... Virginia Tech's **John Engelberger** (4.71) beat Kansas State's **Darren Howard** (5.09) in the 40, but neither player has the bulk to play every down in the NFL. ... Notre Dame's **Lamont Bryant** came out of nowhere to post a 4.93 but pulled up lame on his second turn. Bryant at least caught the attention of some scouts who had written him off. ... California's **Jerry DeLoach**, who was a bit of a disappointment after entering the season as one of the nation's top-rated players, woke up a little bit at the combine. He exhibited better quickness than expected.

LINEBACKER

New Mexico's **Brian Urlacher** was so impressive in his drills—he ran an eye-popping 4.56—that scouts requested he take some drops as a defensive back. He stood out there as well. Urlacher's name was mentioned numerous times on questionnaires when offensive linemen were asked, "Who is the best defensive player you've played against?"

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

FEVER PITCH: *Thompson impressed coaches and scouts with his intensity.*

That was notable, considering Urlacher played safety in college. Typically, an offensive lineman's response is a defensive end or a tackle. ... Penn State's **LaVar Arrington** and **Brandon Short** didn't participate at the request of their agents, Michigan State's **Julian Peterson** and Ohio State's **Na'il Diggs** remained in street clothes and Tennessee's **Raynoch Thompson** and California's **Sekou Sanyika** said they had the flu. ... Potential first-rounders **Rob Morris** of Brigham Young and **Keith Bulluck** of Syracuse solidified their standing with nice work in drills. While neither ran the 40, scouts were impressed with their athleticism and fluidity. ... **Antonio Wilson** of Texas A&M-Commerce, who followed up an attention-grabbing Senior Bowl with a blazing 4.49, pulled up lame in his second run in the 40 and missed drills.

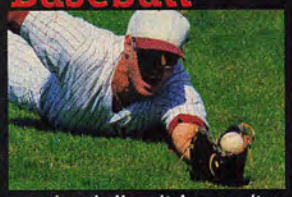
SECONDARY

It was a mixed bag in what easily is the weakest position in the draft (more so than quarterback). ... Although heralded prospect **Rashard Anderson** of Jackson State ran a slower time (4.56) than anticipated, scouts had no complaints considering his size (6-2½, 204). ... Virginia's **Antwan Harris,** who ran the fastest time (4.42), emerged as a late-round possibility. ... Helping their cause were Iowa's **Matt Bowen** and Oklahoma's **William Bartee**. Bowen is a strong safety who answered many doubters with a time of 4.50, and Bartee did the same with a 4.44. Bartee likely will get a shot at cornerback in the pros. ... Texas A&M's **Sedrick Curry** and **Jason Webster** raised their stock with matching times of 4.46. ... Better off staying home: Arkansas' **Kenoy Kennedy** and BYU's **Brian Gray**. Once considered a fourth-round pick, Kennedy logged a sluggish 4.77. Gray posted a 4.84 after running a 4.52 on campus last spring.

ODDS AND ENDS

Though specialists typically don't fare well in Indy, that wasn't the case this year. The opinion of several former kickers brought in by teams to evaluate specialists was that Florida State kicker **Sebastian Janikowski** and Texas A&M punter **Shane Lechler** are rare talents. Janikowski's workout trumped that of the Bucs' Martin Gramatica, a third-round pick last year. Both Janikowski and Lechler could be gone by the end of the second round, although Janikowski's recent legal skirmishes and reputation as a partier worry many teams and could lower his draft stock. … Despite committing huge money to quarterback Kordell Stewart a year ago and then signing free agent Kent Graham in February, the Steelers have expressed interest in taking Marshall's **Pennington** with the eighth overall pick. Tabbing Pennington that early in the first round would be a significant reach, but the Steelers believe he has enough skills to develop into a productive starter. … The 49ers are hoping Pennington will be available at No. 12, but they also would be delighted if Oklahoma tackle **McDougle** drops to them at that spot. … Although they have a big need at wide receiver, the Raiders may go with an outside linebacker in the first round and rely on the great depth at receiver in the second round. Raider scouts are high on Syracuse's **Bulluck**. … Despite the free-agent signing of James Stewart, Detroit coaches are still open to taking a running back in the first round. If Wisconsin's **Dayne** drops to them at No. 20, members of the Lions' staff will lobby coach Bobby Ross to take him. … Although they now have holes on the offensive line, Minnesota will go with defense with the 25th pick. If the Vikings decide there isn't a corner worth taking that high, look for them to take a pass rusher. … The Packers are extremely high on Florida State wideout **Coles**. Some scouts think he would be the team's best receiver as a rookie, even better than Antonio Freeman. … Titans coaches were disappointed in the overall performance of the receivers at the combine, but they still plan to take a big-play guy in the first round. They believe there are five or six prospects who could start immediately.

Baseball



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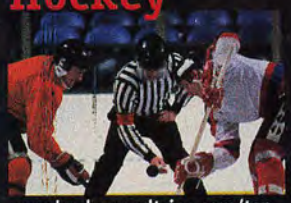

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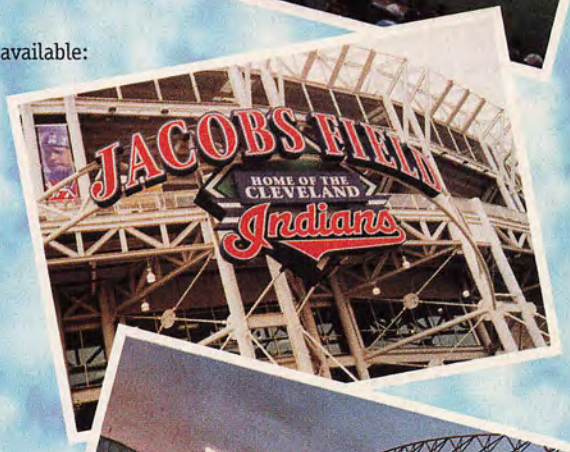
WEST COAST EXPRESS
- Qualcomm Stadium
- Edison International Field
- Dodger Stadium
- Pacific Bell Park
- Network Associates Coliseum
- Safeco Field



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TSN Player Ratings

Quarterbacks

OVERRATED
Tee Martin, Tennessee
Peyton Manning's successor was a proven winner at Tennessee but arm strength and accuracy are a concern.

UNDERRATED
Tom Brady, Michigan
Has the leadership qualities and enough natural talent to make an immediate impact. A real competitor, too.

SLEEPER
Todd Husak, Stanford
Productivity and efficiency at the college level seemed to go unnoticed. Lack of arm strength works against him.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Joe Hamilton, Georgia Tech
A strong Senior Bowl week put a lot of size questions to rest. Productive college player with good leadership skills.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Tim Rattay, Louisiana Tech
Product of his college system, lacks arm strength to make the requisite NFL passes. Questionable pro prospect.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-4	220	4.94
NFL Minimum	6-0	195	5.00

Most people think size is a huge factor in grading an NFL quarterback, but it may be becoming less so. Young players like Cade McNown of Chicago and Jake Plummer of Arizona don't necessarily fit the prototype size. The most important things a quarterback must have is a great feel for the game, excellent peripheral vision and an innate sense of his team's offensive philosophy. They must have at least adequate arm strength and show some zip on the ball, with the deep out pattern being the best measurement of arm strength. If he can deliver this ball on a rope and without an arc, then his arm strength is probably adequate. Today's quarterbacks must have leadership qualities and the ability to play under pressure. An NFL team often will mirror the personality of its quarterback. Although hard to find, a big, physical quarterback with a strong arm is still the ultimate prize, and if he has some mobility and athletic ability, it's a bonus. This position requires a tough person, mentally and physically. Many quarterbacks are misevaluated out of college because scouts tend to grade production over ability.

Ratings and text by The War Room.

The drop-off from last year's class to this year's is drastic. Chad Pennington and Chris Redman are the bona fide front-runners, but there is concern among NFL coaches and scouts that those two prospects are not ready to make the jump to the next level. Ordinarily, teams don't like to reach for quarterbacks in the draft; however, this year could be an exception because of the drop in talent after Pennington and Redman, combined with the need at the position for so many teams heading into the 2000 season.

Even after last year's draft, in which five quarterbacks were taken in the first round, five or six teams still need a franchise quarterback. Giovanni Carmazzi, Tom Brady, Mark Bulger and Tim Rattay all are fringe prospects who could easily slip to the third or fourth rounds in most years but, because of the mediocrity at the position, project as second- and third-round choices. Carmazzi, a small-school prospect, is a classic example of the desperation in the league at quarterback. He is extremely raw, but he still projects as the No. 4 quarterback because his natural size and arm strength lend to his development as a starter at the next level.

The interesting aspect of this year's class is that big-name prospects such as Tee Martin and Joe Hamilton likely will be late-round picks because of their glaring limitations. Martin has all the measurables and shows an outstanding zip on the ball, but his inconsistency as a passer limits his potential to step in and play right away. Hamilton is considered one of the most efficient passers coming out of college, but his small stature is not suited to the pro game. As far as a sleeper, keep an eye on Todd Husak. He is a natural passer with a good feel for reading coverages and could sneak up on many draft boards as a quality backup.

1 Chad Pennington, Marshall
6-3 224 4.90 (40 time)
1st round

NFL comparison: Brad Johnson, Redskins

Arm strength: Has a strong arm and can make all the throws. Good zip on the deep out. Can fit the ball into tight spots, especially on intermediate routes. Deep ball tends to float, but he has excellent range. **Grade: 6.5**

Accuracy/delivery: Shows great feel for short and intermediate routes. Has excellent anticipation and can hit receivers in stride on underneath routes. Gets rid of ball fairly well. Arm mechanics are a bit unusual but don't hinder his quickness or accuracy as a passer. Has the arm to be a solid deep passer but tends to overshoot receivers. **Grade: 6.0**

Field vision: Reads coverages well but rarely saw complicated schemes. Extremely patient and makes very conservative decisions with the ball. Has good feel for where receivers are on field. **Grade: 6.5**

Running ability: Not naturally gifted. Shows good feet but not a threat to take off. Can throw on the run but a significantly more efficient passer when planted. **Grade: 4.0**

Pocket awareness: Has great feel in pocket. Feet are technically sound; knows when to step up or take off. Will hang in pocket and take the hit. Rarely gets rattled. **Grade: 7.0**

Notable: 2000 Senior Bowl MVP; Heisman Trophy finalist.

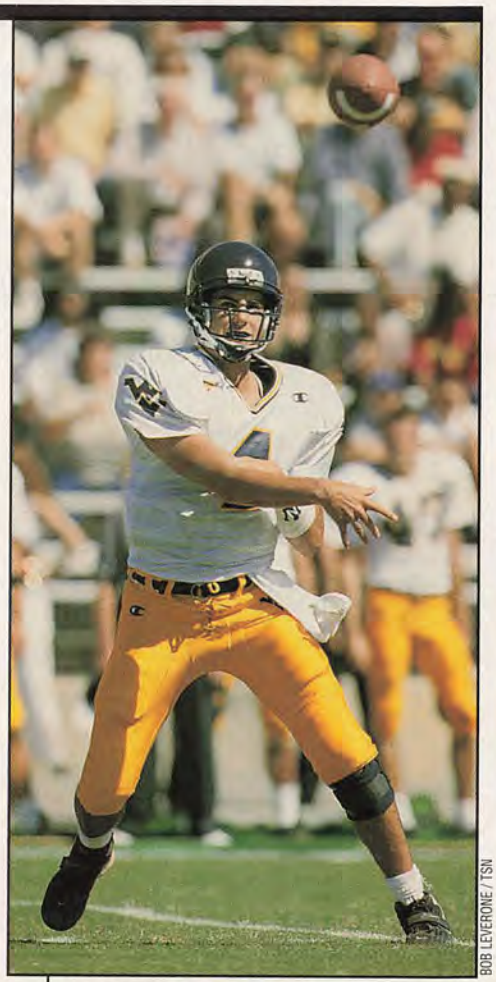
Final analysis: Is the top quarterback in the draft because he embodies many intangibles on top of his talent. Presence in huddle and ability to run an offense are extremely impressive. Understands game and is willing to work to improve. The type of guy you can build a team around. **OVERALL GRADE: 30.0**

2 Chris Redman, Louisville
6-3 227 4.80
1st round

NFL comparison: Trent Green, Rams

Arm strength: Not overly impressive, but he makes most throws. Has more trouble throwing outside routes. Can make all the throws downfield and in the middle of the field, but he tends to overcompensate on the deep out. **Grade: 6.0**

Accuracy/delivery: Mechanics could use refining, but he's extremely accurate and efficient. Shows good touch and ability to lay ball in over coverage. Only problems come



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

CARETAKER: *The underrated Bulger doesn't have a great arm, but he can make all the throws.*

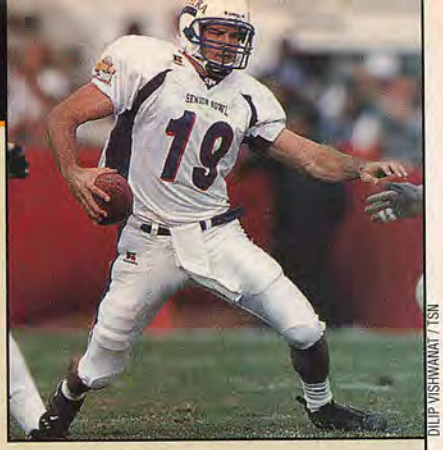
GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

when he forces balls into coverage when out of range. Very quick getting ball off. **Grade: 6.5**
Field vision: This may be biggest concern. Sees second and third options, but sometimes misses coverage reads. Has feel for what he's looking for in matchups and works hard at improving understanding of coverage but has too many lapses. **Grade: 4.5**
Running ability: Does not have great speed, but is a natural athlete. Has enough quickness and toughness to compete as a runner when necessary. Throws well on the move but a pocket passer by nature. Lacks mobility to beat defense when things break down up front. **Grade: 5.5**
Pocket awareness: Shows good footwork and has athleticism to avoid the rush but does not always feel it coming. Does not have great sense of backside pressure. **Grade: 5.0**
Notable: Won 1999 Unitas Golden Arm Award, presented to the nation's top senior quarterback.
Final analysis: Has good combination of all the physical skills that it takes to make it at pro level. A natural leader who seems to demand respect. A concern is his ability to make the jump to the next level, but his performance during Senior Bowl week was a great indicator that he will be able to adjust to the speed and complexity of the NFL game. Has extremely competitive nature and is an intelligent quarterback but does not play with great consistency, and it usually takes him some time to adapt to new schemes or looks. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.5**

3 Marc Bulger, West Virginia
6-2⅛ 206 4.85
2nd round

NFL comparison: Troy Aikman, Cowboys
Arm strength: Shows solid arm and can make all the throws. Has arm to throw the deep ball but tends to float ball downfield. Can throw all the underneath and outside routes. **Grade: 6.0**
Accuracy/delivery: Has extremely quick release, but delivery needs work. Is one of the more accurate passers in the underneath zone. Times routes well and does outstanding job of hitting receivers in stride but needs to learn to adjust speeds of passes. Has tendency to put too much touch on throws that need more authority. **Grade: 5.5**
Field vision: Has good feel for where receivers are on field. Will find second read and does good job recognizing coverage. Has tendency to make throws that he can't thread through coverage. Tries to force too many balls. **Grade: 5.0**
Running ability: Has average speed for a quarterback, but is not a real flexible athlete. Has good mechanics throwing on the run, but is more effective as a dropback passer. Injuries have slowed him. Not as quick as he used to be; won't be much of a threat to take off with the ball at the next level. **Grade: 4.0**
Pocket awareness: Shows excellent poise inside pocket. Will stand in and wait until last possible second to get rid of ball, but does not always feel the rush. Has taken a lot of big hits and turned the ball over because he plays the waiting game. **Grade: 4.5**
Notable: Back soreness and knee problems cost him half of senior season; threw for 11 touchdowns and 13 interceptions.
Final analysis: Underrated in draft because physical skills don't jump out. One of those quarterbacks who has great feel for entire game, but injuries have scouts and coaches concerned. Has some skills to develop but does not have lot of room to improve physically. It will take the right situation, but Bulger could be an excellent caretaking quarterback—i.e., a competent quarterback who puts other players in position to win—at the next level. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.0**

SPOTLIGHT
GIOVANNI CARMAZZI


DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

Not every NFL quarterback followed a golden path wearing a can't-miss tag as Peyton Manning and Tim Couch did. The league also has players such as Kurt Warner and Jon Kitna—long shots from small schools with big dreams who bucked their way into starring roles.

Giovanni Carmazzi from, of all places, Hofstra has nudged his way into the elite group of quarterbacks available. Only Chad Pennington, Chris Redman and Marc Bulger seem like locks to be selected before him. "I always refer to it as taking the road less traveled," Carmazzi says.

That road started at Pacific, where Carmazzi redshirted a year but never played in a game before the school dropped football. He was swayed to Hempstead, N.Y., by coach Joe Gardi, even though Carmazzi had never heard of Hofstra, and it was across the country from his native Sacramento.

In four years with the Flying Dutchmen, Carmazzi threw for 9,371 yards and 71 touchdowns. NFL scouts like his size (6-2½, 219 pounds), arm strength and mobility.

Carmazzi played sparingly in the Senior Bowl and was overshadowed by Pennington and Redman, his North teammates, but he impressed scouts in practices. Before the all-star game, Buccaneers scout Joe DiMarzo said, "He's made some good throws and some bad throws. Clearly, though, he is the most athletic of the three guys out there."

North coach George Seifert of the Panthers said, "Some players have an infectious personality around players, and he's one of them. I love the energy of the man."

Like Warner and Kitna, Carmazzi may have to take a circuitous route to a steady NFL job. Though he may be the top Division I-AA quarterback prospect since Steve McNair, he will have to overcome the stigma of playing against inferior competition in college. He will have to adjust to playing against bigger and stronger players who move at a faster speed. And Carmazzi will have to learn to play in a pro-style offense. Hofstra ran a fast-break, run-and-shoot attack. "I haven't been in a huddle in four years," Carmazzi says. Nor has he played in an offense with a fullback or tight end.

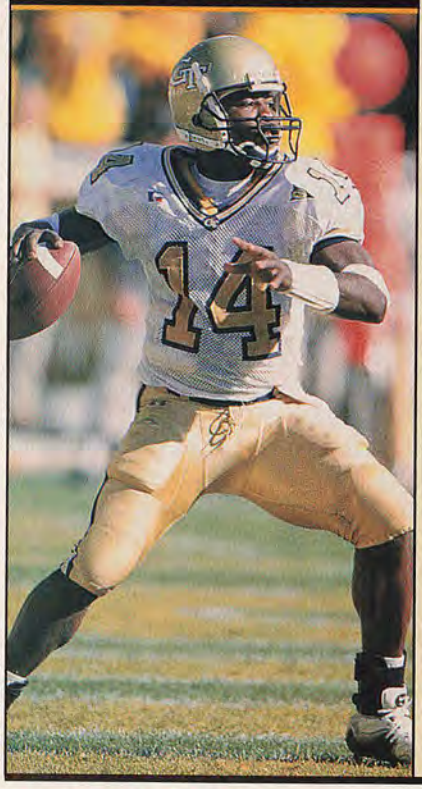
But there is little doubt Carmazzi will be drafted—and that he eventually will stick in the NFL.

"This isn't too big for him," says Bengals coach Bruce Coslet, who watched Carmazzi at the Senior Bowl. "He's not out of place out here, that's for sure." —*Kyle Veltrop*

4 Giovanni Carmazzi, Hofstra
6-2½ 219 4.63
2nd round

NFL comparison: Tony Banks, Ravens
Arm strength: Has one of the better natural arms of any quarterback in draft. Throws extremely tight spiral. Better arm for short-to-intermediate routes but has shown ability to get ball downfield. Does not have great touch. **Grade: 6.0**
Accuracy/delivery: Good underneath accuracy. Long ball is inconsistent. Will underthrow deep receiver because he does not have great feel for loft or touch on deep ball. Has bit of a "shot put" delivery. Release is quick, but release point tends to vary, which seems to cause problems with accuracy. **Grade: 4.5**
Field vision: Has outstanding feel for passing game. Makes good reads and understands coverage. Makes good adjustments, but biggest problem is he believes in arm too much. Tends to force balls into coverage. **Grade: 4.5**
Running ability: Moves extremely well, especially for size. Has great natural speed and can gain yards when play breaks down. Physical runner who will lower shoulder and pick up extra yards. **Grade: 5.0**
Pocket awareness: Has above-average dropback skills. Setup is solid and shows good feel for rush. Needs to do better job of setting feet to throw in pocket. **Grade: 4.0**
Notable: Rhodes Scholar as senior (4.0 grade-point average).
Final analysis: Intelligent and extremely well-built quarterback. Speed/size/strength combination makes him interesting project-type prospect. Obvious concern is that he played at Division 1-AA level, but with correct system, coaching and enough experience, he has potential to become solid starter in NFL. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

SPOTLIGHT
JOE HAMILTON



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Joe Hamilton, the 5-10, 190-pound quarterback from Georgia Tech, has said that size doesn't matter dozens of times, but he's not the only one saying it. Georgia Tech offensive coordinator Ralph Friedgen agrees. "He's only about two inches (actually, four) shorter than Joe Montana, one of the greatest ever, but he has that ability to see. And Joe is even more mobile than Montana."

Friedgen says he has been told by NFL scouts that Hamilton could get picked in the first round of the draft—or not at all. The spectrum is wide because Hamilton doesn't fit the traditional mold of a big, physical quarterback who can hang in the pocket, survey the field, launch an accurate pass and take a hit. But he can do all of those things and more.

"My concern at first was that he couldn't see (downfield), but that hasn't been a problem," Friedgen says. "He has the God-given ability to see the field. ... I've seen 6-5 guys that don't have that kind of vision. He can find the creases and spot the receivers. He reads coverages well and he has a strong arm."

Hamilton, the only Georgia Tech quarterback to rack up over 10,000 offensive yards in his college career (of which 1,500 were rushing yards), is not the traditional quarterback physically. However, his style of play fits the direction the NFL is moving. Quarterbacks such as Doug Flutie of the Bills and Shaun King of the Buccaneers have styles much like Hamilton. They read the coverage well and assess what's happening downfield, then scramble to make the pass—or rush for yardage if they have to. Friedgen, a former assistant coach for the Chargers, thinks this type of quarterback soon will be in vogue in the NFL.

Hamilton impressed quite a few NFL scouts at the Senior Bowl. "Like Lou Holtz says, 'His feet still touch the ground, right?' I love this kid," says one NFC scouting director. "There are no questions, no unknowns about his attitude. We know his height; he's 5-10. The way he took over that team at the Senior Bowl, I was very impressed. He's a special athlete with great competitiveness."

Hamilton's characteristic mobility is reflected in the fact that Georgia Tech's opponents recorded only 18 sacks in 12 games last season. Although the Yellow Jackets' offensive line is to be given credit, Friedgen says Hamilton contributed with his uncanny ability to evade the pass rush. Often, he turns a potential loss into a good play by scrambling.

"He has a way of making people miss, while still looking up the field," Friedgen says. "That's a stat that goes unnoticed by most people."—*Liz House*

5 Tom Brady, Michigan
6-4 210 5.00
3rd round

NFL comparison: Brian Griese, Broncos

Most underrated quarterback in draft. Has above-average arm strength and solid lower and upper-body frame. Can make most throws but tends to put too much air under deep ball. Has adequate feet and decent setup. Understands position and has excellent feel for where receivers are on field. Shows good feet in pocket but does not always feel blitz, especially from backside. Extremely accurate in short-to-intermediate passing game but too erratic throwing deep ball. Makes good reads but tends to force ball into coverage. Has excellent demeanor and with more experience could develop into a competent "caretaker." Great competitor and type of player who could work well within correct system. **Notable:** Second quarterback in Michigan history to pass for more than 2,000 yards in consecutive seasons.

OVERALL GRADE: 22.0

6 Tee Martin, Tennessee
6-2⅝ 215 4.70
3rd round

NFL comparison: Steve McNair, Titans

Proven winner with excellent size/speed/strength combination. Has good upside because of natural skills. Good zip on deep out route and great feel for open seams. Shows quick dropback with outstanding feet. Gets into throwing motion quickly. Needs lots of work reading coverages. Does not show good anticipation as passer. Tends to throw into coverage and does not have very good vision. Has strong arm and can make any throw but too erratic throwing deep ball and too inconsistent leading receivers. Extremely comfortable throwing on run and solid runner with ball. Needs to work on poise in pocket. Stands in well against blitz but does not show ability to beat it by throwing ball. Biggest asset is quiet leadership ability; great presence in huddle and handles game pressure extremely well. **Notable:** Went 22-2 as starter for Tennessee; led Volunteers to 13-0 record and national championship as junior.

OVERALL GRADE: 21.0

7 Tim Rattay, Louisiana Tech
6-0⅞ 199 4.79
4th round

NFL comparison: Ty Detmer, Browns

Extremely efficient and accurate passer but does not have arm strength to step in and play right away at next level. Has trouble with outside routes. Deep out pass doesn't have enough zip; ball tends to float. Has decent footwork and does best work out of shotgun formation. Setup is marginal; needs to do better job of cocking arm and getting into throwing motion quicker. Has great feel for position and passing game. Not a classic dropback passer but does excellent job of working underneath. Sees whole field and does outstanding job of finding second and third receivers. Good decision maker with ball and finds open receiver but will have trouble in NFL because teams will force him to make throws downfield and to the outside. Many scouts and coaches fear he is a product of his college system and that he will struggle with more complex passing scheme that may exploit marginal arm strength. **Notable:** Finished career ranked second on all-time NCAA passing list; threw for more than 200 yards in each of 33 starts.

OVERALL GRADE: 20.0

8 Joe Hamilton, Georgia Tech
5-10 190 4.76
5th round

NFL comparison: Doug Flutie, Bills

Most efficient passer in draft, but size is obvious concern. Lacks height and physical skills to play at next level but still extremely intriguing prospect because of great feel for passing game, touch as passer and athleticism. Shows great short and intermediate skills, but deep ball is a concern; passes tend to hang. Biggest asset is running ability. Needs to prove he can overcome size limitations and match his production in the NFL behind much bigger offensive line that will limit passing windows. A natural leader who commands respect on field and in huddle. **Notable:** Had nation's highest quarterback rating (175.0) in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

9 Todd Husak, Stanford
6-3 215 5.00
5th round

NFL comparison: Erik Kramer, Chargers

Scouts love size and frame he should be able to grow into. Has only marginal arm. Accurate passer underneath, but has some

trouble with deep ball. Does not show great zip on deep out. More equipped to play within timing passing game. Shows great feel for coverage and gets rid of ball quickly, but forces it into coverage too often. Thinks he has stronger arm than he does. Still needs work on his feet and mechanics as passer. Work ethic is suspect. Will need time to develop as backup at next level. **Notable:** First Stanford quarterback since John Elway in 1982 to be named to All-Pac 10 first team. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

10 Kevin Feterik, Brigham Young
5-11⅛ 189 4.92
6th round

NFL comparison: Jim Harbaugh, Chargers

Lefthander who lacks size and arm strength to compete at next level. A product of pass-friendly system at Brigham Young but has one of the great feels for passing game of all the quarterbacks. Shows excellent touch as passer and knack for laying ball in over coverage. Sees field extremely well and knows where receivers are at all times. Does outstanding job of spreading ball around in passing game. Feet need work, especially in setup. Does not pose much threat as runner. Does not show much feel for the pass rush in terms of mobility but capable of beating blitz through air. Shows great poise as passer and will step up in pocket. Size and strength limitations may be too much to overcome, but with enough experience and in correct system, he could be solid backup. **Notable:** Averaged just one interception for every 30 attempts in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

11 Leon Murray, Tennessee State
6-2⅜ 200 4.80
6th round

NFL comparison: Jay Fiedler, Dolphins

Developmental-project type with enough size and athletic ability to challenge at next level. Needs to work on accuracy, especially in intermediate passing game. Mechanics need work. Shows good feet and quick setup but does not see entire field and release still needs refinement. An intelligent player with an understanding for the position. Needs more game experience and work on becoming a more consistent passer and overall player. Shows good natural anticipation and ability to avoid pass rush. Small-school prospect. Projects as late-round pick who will need dedicated coaching and time to adjust to NFL level. **Notable:** Threw for 18 touchdowns and only three interceptions in seven games in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.5**

12 Billy Volek, Fresno State
6-1¼ 201 5.09
6th round

NFL comparison: Rodney Peete, Redskins

Marginal size and physical skills. Average arm strength but knows limitations as passer and plays within abilities. Does not force passes and seems to have outstanding feel for passing game. Shows decent setup and solid mechanics as passer. More of an intermediate passer with good vision and decision-making skills. Anticipates blitz well. Technically sound inside pocket, but is not a running threat. Accurate underneath passer, but does not have zip on deep out or seam routes to make the throws at NFL level. Extremely poised with good leadership qualities. **Notable:** Threw 30 touchdowns and only three interceptions in 1999. **OVERALL GRADE: 14.5**

13 Doug Johnson, Florida
6-1 215 4.90
7th round

NFL comparison: Eric Zeier, free agent

Interesting prospect because of his arm strength, size and athleticism. Still needs to develop mechanics. Has lot of potential, but shoulder and elbow problems are concerns. Accuracy suffers because of inconsistent mechanics. Sets up quickly and has nice delivery. Struggles with deep ball; tends to float passes into coverage, especially in middle of field. Needs more work on developing feel for reads and blitz recognition. Played at high level at Florida but had trouble against disguised coverages. Has little feel for secondary receivers and makes poor decisions with ball. Shows little presence on field as leader and has history of being an uncoachable player. **Notable:** Baseball could be a future option. **OVERALL GRADE: 14.0.**

14 Keith Smith, Arizona
5-10½ 207 4.55
7th round

NFL comparison: Ray Lucas, Jets

Lacks NFL quarterback size, but athleticism, pure speed and playmaking ability make him an interesting prospect. Smart intermediate passer with adequate arm. Consistent passer, accurate underneath. Sets up quickly and has tremendous feel in pocket. Throws outstanding ball on run; is creative on the move. Biggest knock is lack of arm for deep ball. Lacks natural zip and often must force ball downfield. Shows little potential as passer. **Notable:** Had quarterback rating of 135.0 in '99 season. **OVERALL GRADE: 13.0**

15 Spergon Wynn, Southwest Texas St.
6-3½ 230 4.76
7th round

NFL comparison: Trent Dilfer, free agent

Great size and physical skills. Raw prospect with little game experience, but shows enough athletic skills to work with at NFL level. Adequate enough arm to improve as passer. Shows good accuracy on all his throws despite marginal release and delivery. Still needs lot of work on feet and throwing mechanics. Shows good pocket presence and feel for blitz, but has not had enough time to develop coverage-read skills. Has reputation as hard worker; very coachable. **Notable:** Transferred from University of Minnesota and lettered just once in three seasons. **OVERALL GRADE: 13.0**

Others: Phil Stambaugh, Lehigh, 6-2¾, 217, 5.07; Travis Brown, Northern Arizona, 6-3½, 212, 4.80; Corte McGuffey, Northern Colorado, 6-0, 206, 4.73; Bill Burke, Michigan State, 6-4¼, 200, 5.00; Sean Keenan, Williams College, 6-3, 208, 5.12; Andy Jepson, Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo, 6-3⅝, 183, 4.73; Justin Fuente, Murray State, 6-1½, 238, 5.11.

SPOTLIGHT
TOM BRADY

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

While Marshall's Chad Pennington and Louisville's Chris Redman became the buzz as the top quarterback prospects for the NFL draft during the 1999 college season, Michigan's Tom Brady had to accomplish a lot just to emerge as the top quarterback on his own team.

Sharing time with a heralded *sophomore* such as Drew Henson would have been a difficult situation for many fifth-year seniors with NFL hopes, but Brady realized the benefits of healthy competition. "Drew is a tremendous player," he says. "Having someone around like that only pushed my game to a higher level."

Brady played his way onto the list of top quarterbacks with his play down the stretch in '99. His stock has been on the rise since he got the full-time role halfway through the season. The deep ball may not be his strong suit, but he thrived in Michigan's short passing game, reeling off a hot streak of accuracy as the Wolverines pushed toward the postseason.

When NFL teams look beyond obvious physical attributes, they put stock in a player's intelligence and other intangible qualities. Brady, who was briefly on a college boxing club, feels that his won't-back-down attitude is his best on-the-field talent. "I think my best asset as a player is that in the fourth quarter, with the game on the line, I have the desire to win and the feeling that our team is not going to lose," he says.

That competitive poise stood out in the Orange Bowl, when Brady (369 yards, four touchdowns) led Michigan to a comeback win over Alabama. He also had a promising outing in the East-West Shrine Classic.

Brady needs to work on reading blitzes and elaborate defenses. Like Brian Griese and Scott Dreisbach, his Michigan quarterback predecessors, he could use some long-term training with a team that already features a prominent running game and a talented, veteran receiving corps—similar to Brady's situation at Michigan with Anthony Thomas and Marcus Knight.

Projected as a third-round pick, Brady is likely to wear the headset of a backup at first. He knows it will require a lot of patience before he will fit into an NFL team's scheme. "I have lessons to learn," he says. "I am willing to learn them anywhere, any way I can." —*Vinnie Iyer*

TSN Player Ratings

Running Backs

OVERRATED
Ron Dayne, Wisconsin
Heisman Trophy winner took too many hits and lacks breakaway speed. No major college player ever had more carries.

UNDERRATED
Chrys Chukwuma, Arkansas
Bruising back shows enough quickness and speed to break some big plays.

SLEEPER
Reuben Droughns, Oregon
Sprinter who can contribute as a speed back and a receiver out of the backfield. Has skills but needs more polish.

STOCK ON THE RISE
J.R. Redmond, Arizona State
A shifty back with enough strength to carry the load. Could develop into a dangerous third-down back.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Travis Prentice, Miami (Ohio)
Not as fast or agile as originally thought. One-dimensional back did not do much blocking or receiving in college.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	5-10	210	4.55	NFL Minimum	5-8	195	4.75

Being a 1,000-yard runner in college doesn't guarantee NFL success. That's why this position may be the most misevaluated in the NFL, as scouts tend to grade players more on production than ability. Qualities such as quickness through the hole, vision and good balance are very important. Speed is nice, but quickness is great. There are a lot of great NFL runners that lack great 40-speed but have exceptional quickness. Today's running back must be versatile and have run skills, but he must also catch the ball out of the backfield. There was a lot of controversy when the Colts selected Edgerrin James over Ricky Williams a year ago, but the reasons behind the Colts' decision were sound. James was a great receiver, he had great open-field skills and his running style did not lead to a lot of head-on collisions, as Williams' style did. The ability to make tacklers miss and avoiding head-on collisions will lengthen a career. Blocking is also an underevaluated skill. Ask any NFL coach, and he'll tell you a rookie running back will sit on the bench for his lack of success as a blocker much longer than his inefficiencies as a runner. It is very rare when you get a back that can do everything, but that's why Marshall Faulk is so valuable. He can run, catch and even return kicks if necessary. Guys like Faulk and James create nightmare matchup problems for opposing defenses.

This year's group features three prospects who project as franchise-type backs. Thomas Jones and Shaun Alexander are considered the standouts because of their overall talent, but Ron Dayne is perhaps the most interesting player because of his physical running style and ability to carry the load at the next level.

There is a clear second tier, where Travis Prentice, Jamal Lewis and J.R. Redmond show a lot of potential as premier runners. All are legitimate premier-back prospects but will need experience and time before emerging as starters in the NFL.

This class also offers a heavy dose of third-down type threats who, in the right system, could contribute right away. Michael Wiley, Reuben Droughns, Rondell Mealey, Trung Canidate and Doug Chapman all are speedsters with great promise as receivers coming out of the backfield.

Perhaps the most underrated player is Chrys Chukwuma, who wowed scouts and coaches with his bruising running style and body control at the Senior Bowl. Chukwuma is the type of runner who will creep up the draft board and could wind up being taken as early as the second round because of his potential as an every-down back.

*** Denotes underclassman.**

1 Thomas Jones, Virginia
5-9¾ 205 4.45 (40 time)
1st round

NFL comparison: Marshall Faulk, Rams

Inside runner: Has excellent vision. Can pick and slide. Not a power runner but runs technically sound. Uses leg drive and body lean to pick up extra yards. Has great feel for seams and shows excellent explosion through hole. Works to finish runs. **Grade: 6.0**

Outside runner: Shows good upfield burst and explosion. Has second gear in open field. Tends to dance a bit to hole but runs with good patience and finds open lane. Has speed to get to corner and is a threat in open field because of outstanding change of direction and quick feet. **Grade: 7.0**

CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

STAND UP: *Chapman has good size and strength, but he goes down a bit too easily.*

Blocker: Capable, with good sense of blitz. Does not sacrifice body as much as he should and tends to cut-block instead of blocking head on. Gets good positioning but needs technical work on finishing blocks. **Grade: 5.0**

Hands/routes: Has extremely natural hands and catches ball away from body. Has feel for passing game and exceptional instincts on screens. Knows where to position himself on swing routes and does solid job of getting upfield after the catch. Is receiving threat—though not his specialty—because of outstanding quickness and understanding of passing game. **Grade: 6.5**

Durability: Never misses any time and has proved he will play with pain. Has not taken a lot of clean hits to body and does not expose himself much. Is relatively strong for size and does good job of warding off tacklers with straight-arm. **Grade: 7.0**

Notable: Voted class president three times in high school.

Final analysis: Will be exceptional all-around back at next level. Has all the skills and shows outstanding feel for each aspect of game. Combines power, speed and agility. Will become premier back because of versatility. Needs to improve ball security; tends to expose ball to defenders when making double moves. **OVERALL GRADE: 31.5**

2 Shaun Alexander, Alabama
5-11⅝ 218 4.69
1st round

NFL comparison: Jamal Anderson, Falcons

Inside runner: Tough, with excellent leg drive and body lean. Has exceptional lower-body strength and runs technically sound. Shifty and does super job of finding seam and attacking. Body control and vision make him special. Always seems to gain yards after contact. **Grade: 7.0**

Outside runner: Has competitive speed and shows good burst when he finds crease. More of a cutback runner who sees seam open and attacks it with great explosion. More of a bruising outside runner but shifty and quick-footed enough to make defenders miss in open field. **Grade: 6.0**

Blocker: Solid enough to leave in on passing downs but could struggle some vs. bigger and stronger blitzing linebackers. Has size and lower-body strength to anchor against blitz. Could use some technical work in this area, especially with hands, but has all the skills to develop at next level. **Grade: 5.0**

Hands/routes: What sets him apart from most runners. Has exceptional hands and feel in passing game. Catches ball naturally and is proven deep threat. Gets downfield well and can catch ball in crowd. Potent sideline route runner with good acceleration to ball. **Grade: 7.5**

Durability: Has taken lot of hits and has had to miss some time because of injuries. Though not alarming, tends to get beaten up because of bruising running style. Has ideal build to take a lot of blows but is only marginally strong for size. **Grade: 5.5**

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

Notable: Finished career as Alabama's all-time leading rusher.
Final analysis: Could be most complete back in draft because of inside running ability and potency as receiver. Tough, physical runner who can wear down a defense. Fits in most offensive systems and should be able to step in and play at high level as premier back in rookie season. **OVERALL GRADE: 31.0**

3 Ron Dayne, Wisconsin
5-10 253 4.55
1st round

NFL comparison: Jerome Bettis, Steelers
Inside runner: Punishing, with outstanding leg drive and leverage. Runs low to ground and delivers blow every time he carries ball. Doesn't have great quickness but shows good feel between tackles and always runs hard. Solid feet; can pick and slide. Shows good vision and patience, then a special burst when he finds seam. **Grade: 7.5**
Outside runner: May be weakest area at next level. Has solid speed and quickness but will have hard time getting around corner. Not a home run threat but does good job of finding hole and attacking it. Will not break many long runs at next level because he simply doesn't have speed or extra gear to create separation. **Grade: 5.5**
Blocker: Has little experience but shows natural instincts picking up blitz. Has perfect frame to anchor. Possesses great base as blocker but will need to work on technique and use of hands. Biggest challenge will be adjusting on move when asked to make downfield block. **Grade: 5.5**
Hands/routes: Mostly a dump-off type receiver. Has been reliable when asked to participate in passing game but a bit stuff as route runner and hands undersized. Not a downfield threat but causes matchup problems when he gets ball in open field. **Grade: 5.5**
Durability: Bruising back who can punish a defense. Has played through pain but taken lots of hits to lower body, which usually shortens a runner's career. Ankle problems forced him to miss some time. **Grade: 4.5**
Notable: Qualified for 1996 Olympic Trials in shot put.
Final analysis: Most naturally powerful back in draft and has type of size/speed combo to wear down defenses. Premier-type back, but question remains whether he's an every-down back. Has limited experience as blocker and receiver and has taken lots of hits, which worries scouts when analyzing potential durability. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

4 Jamal Lewis, Tennessee *
5-11 225 4.55
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Emmitt Smith, Cowboys
Inside runner: Pesky. Does good job of bursting through hole. Powerful for size and works to finish. Always keeps feet moving and does good job of delivering blow. Is effective when he runs aggressively but has tendency to dance instead of attacking line of scrimmage. **Grade: 6.0**
Outside runner: Has enough quickness and speed to get to corner. Quicker than he is fast. Does good job of reading and reacting to what develops up front. Shows good second gear in open field. Physical running style makes him difficult to tackle one-on-one. **Grade: 6.0**
Blocker: Has know-how and physical skills. Does fine job of picking up blitz and has enough lower-body strength to anchor at point of attack. Since injury, has been more tentative as blocker; technique has deteriorated with less-aggressive approach. **Grade: 5.0**
Hands/routes: Has soft hands and excellent concentration. Shows good feel for routes and has excellent body control. Has shown flashes in vertical game but is mostly a flat and screen receiver with good change of direction and elusiveness after catch. **Grade: 6.5**
Durability: This is biggest concern. Had knee injury in '98 and shoulder problems in '99. Running style is technically sound. Runs with good center of gravity but seems to get beaten up more than average back. Has been extremely tentative since returning from knee injury; needs to prove he has fully recovered. **Grade: 3.5**
Notable: Injury-riddled senior season limited him to 182 carries.
Final analysis: Could be stretch in first round but has all the skills if he can get back to form as runner. Hesitancy to cut loose has drastically changed effectiveness. If he fully rehabilitates shoulder and mentally gets over knee injury, could emerge as top back in this class. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.0**

5 Travis Prentice, Miami (Ohio)
5-11½ 219 4.50
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Eddie George, Titans
Inside runner: Big back with good strength. Shows good feet and does nice job of picking hole and attacking it. Needs to be more physical and use size more to his advantage. Shows great feel for what develops in front of him but needs to become more aggressive in approach. **Grade: 5.5**
Outside runner: Has good height/weight/speed ratio and uses it well as outside runner. Has little problem turning corner and does excellent job getting upfield when things develop. Is load to bring down in open field and elusive enough to make defenders miss in one-on-one situations. Overall, does excellent

SPOTLIGHT
TRAVIS PRENTICE

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

The F-word.

Nobody at Miami (Ohio) likes to say it, and in the four seasons Travis Prentice played running back, the F-word was uttered only twice.

Fumble. At Miami, that's a dirty word.

When Prentice lost a fumble last October 9 against Bowling Green, it ended a streak of 862 consecutive carries without a lost fumble—an NCAA Division I record. It had been 29 games and almost three years since Prentice last lost a fumble.

Assistant head coach Ron Johnson, who is in charge of Miami's running backs, has a simple rule about fumbling the ball—don't, or spend the rest of the half on the bench.

"We have a roomful of guys who can play running back," said Johnson. "But there's only one football. We try to get players to understand you're expendable, the football is not."

Johnson believes Prentice's ability to avoid putting the ball on the ground will be an attractive quality in the eyes of NFL scouts. "One of the most important things in football is being able to trust that your players are going to take care of the ball," Johnson said. "If Travis continues to place a strong emphasis on holding on to the ball, he's going to be very successful. He's the prototype running back and could be a solid player in the pros for a number of years."

Prentice last season set NCAA Division I career records for scoring (468 points), touchdowns (78) and rushing touchdowns (77) and tied the record held by Tony Dorsett and Herschel Walker with three seasons of 1,500 or more rushing yards. He has great balance, deceptive speed and his strength makes him difficult to bring down.

When Prentice, a Louisville native, went to college, he had never been involved in strength and conditioning program. He got the nickname "Boy Wonder" because the first time he ever lifted in college the coaches told him to keep going as they continued to add weight, and Prentice continued to lift. Now, he benches 415 pounds, squats 585, cleans 405 and runs the 40 in 4.4 seconds.

Prentice's running backs coach in the NFL will work with him on variety of things, but he can save the speech about holding on to the ball. That's something Prentice knows all about.—*Jared Hoffman*

SPOTLIGHT
RON DAYNE

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

Ron Dayne will carry the weight of great expectations wherever he plays in 2000, but it won't be something the bruising Wisconsin running back hasn't faced before.

Dayne got used to critics and attention en route to becoming the NCAA Division I-A rushing king (6,397 yards) last year. Many said he gained most of his yards against soft foes, that he rarely performed well against good defenses. But for his career, Dayne averaged 150.1 yards rushing vs. Big Ten foes and 151.5 against non-conference foes. He finally put the notion of abusing patsies to rest last season following an 88-yard rushing effort in an early-season loss to Michigan. He finished the season with a flurry, ripping bowl-bound Michigan State (214 yards rushing) and Purdue (222) down the stretch to lead Wisconsin to its second consecutive Rose Bowl. In the 1999 Rose Bowl against UCLA, Dayne ran for 246 yards. A year later, he gained 200 rushing yards against Stanford to become just the third player to win consecutive Rose Bowl MVP honors.

"Ron really exemplifies our program," Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez says. "I don't think there's a player that has ever meant more to a program. He's what our program is all about ... blue collar, tough, hard-nosed. He doesn't necessarily do it the easy way, but he does what you have to do for wins."

The numbers support Alvarez's claim. The Badgers were 37-13 in Dayne's four-year tenure in Madison. While Dayne proved he's a winner who is capable of running up big numbers against quality opponents, doubters linger. Some point to his heavy workload. Dayne carried the ball 1,115 times (second most in NCAA annals) at Wisconsin, an average of 278.8 times a season. Factor in bowl games, and it was 305 carries a season. Teams have to wonder how much tread is left on his tires.

And then there's the issue of his ability to catch passes, a desired commodity of any NFL running back who hopes to be on the field for every play. At Wisconsin, Dayne posted career totals of 31 receptions for 304 yards and no touchdowns. His totals diminished each season, dropping from 14 catches to 10, six and one for nine yards last season. Furthermore, he wasn't called on to block often. Wisconsin infrequently threw the ball, so he rarely was asked to pass protect. When the Badgers ran, Dayne usually was the one carrying the load. And if you're looking for breakaway speed, keep looking.

Still, there's lots to like about Dayne, especially his ability to deliver as the focal point of attention during crunch time.

"He's a great running back," says Purdue coach Joe Tiller. "I was impressed with Dayne, because he turns it up in the fourth quarter. The guy is a heck of a football player, and I admire his competitiveness. When the game gets tight, he takes it to another level."

—Tom Dienhart

job when he bounces to outside. **Grade: 6.0**
Blocker: Does not project as every-down back because of inability to pick up blitz and anchor in against pass rush. Has little experience as blocker. Individual drills show he has trouble getting in position; footwork not where it needs to be. **Grade: 4.0**
Hands/routes: Not a real natural receiver. Hands are marginal. Does not understand passing game. Too stiff and mechanical in routes. **Grade: 3.5**
Durability: Workhorse-type back who can carry load. Will not play on many passing downs but projects as primary ballcarrier. Has great strength and runs with good leverage. Does not take a lot of clean shots; flexible athlete who has had few medical problems over his playing career. **Grade: 7.0**
Notable: Was fourth-leading rusher in nation in '99.
Final analysis: Real stretch as first-round player; there's a lot of need at position and a team could reach late in round. Intriguing prospect because of productivity and size. Obvious question: Can he continue to put up numbers at next level, where his speed is just average? Is physical runner with great lower-body strength; needs to prove he has all-around skills to make it as an every-down back in NFL. **OVERALL GRADE: 26.0**

6 J.R. Redmond, Arizona State
6-0 210 4.50
2nd round

NFL comparison: Robert Smith, Vikings
Inside runner: Shifty, with excellent vision and change of direction. Is not a physical runner and will not break many tackles but shows great feet and can bounce outside if he gets through initial hole. Has strong burst to hole and shows excellent instincts as in-line runner. **Grade: 5.5**
Outside runner: Quicker than he is fast but has no problem getting to outside. Explodes upfield when he finds seam. Shows tremendous cutback ability because of vision and burst. A home run threat every time he gets outside but too light on feet to break many tackles. **Grade: 6.0**
Blocker: Has good feel for this aspect of game and is a willing blocker but not real gifted physically. Has hard time anchoring vs. blitz and takes too many chances trying to cut-block defenders. Too slender and lanky to take on linebackers one-on-one. **Grade: 4.0**
Hands/routes: Shows natural hands and concentration as receiver. Speed is big advantage in routes because he creates mismatch for linebackers. Huge threat in open field. Tends to telegraph routes. Given more coaching and experience, has opportunity to become dangerous third-down back. **Grade: 6.0**
Durability: Has had a few minor injuries but nothing alarming. Flexible athlete with good build but not a premier back. Still has room to add bulk and strength but will never be able to carry more than 20 times a game. **Grade: 4.0**
Notable: Played eight different positions in high school.
Final analysis: Solid, all-around player. Will bring a lot to next level as back and return specialist. Has tremendous speed and quickness. Could develop into dangerous third-down speed back in right system. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.5**

7 Reuben Droughns, Oregon
5-11⅛ 207 4.60
2nd round

NFL comparison: Skip Hicks, Redskins
Inside runner: Shows excellent burst and upfield explosion but tends to run too upright. Has excellent vision and sees field well but takes too many hits because of straight-line style. Can pick and slide and has some patience but more an outside runner than a tackle-to-tackle guy. **Grade: 4.5**
Outside runner: Tremendous speed to outside. Does great job getting upfield. More of a track star than a natural runner. Needs to do better job of cutting back and changing direction. Shows too much of body when he turns upfield and makes himself easy target for defenders. **Grade: 5.5**
Blocker: Has good feel and plays with head on swivel but doesn't do good job of anchoring in vs. blitz. A bit undersized and has trouble vs. bigger, more physical linebackers. Could use work on technique. Needs to square shoulders better in hole. Base is not where it should be at this point. **Grade: 4.5**
Hands/routes: Inexperienced route runner with marginal receiving skills. Doesn't show good feel for passing game and needs work

on route running. Has natural hands and does good job of looking ball in. Shows excellent quickness and speed to separate from defenders but needs to become more polished. **Grade: 5.5**
Durability: Right ankle/lower leg fracture in '98 is concern. Still has great speed and is flexible athlete. Running style is too upright. Will need to run with better center of gravity to hold up at next level. **Grade: 4.0**
Notable: Rushed for 172 yards in '98 game vs. UCLA despite playing on a fractured ankle.
Final analysis: Instincts as runner are underrated; development as all-around back has him projected as one of top backs. Still has long way to go before developing into premier back at next level but has the skills and seems extremely coachable.
OVERALL GRADE: 24.0

8 Michael Wiley, Ohio State
6-0 195 4.50
2nd or 3rd round

NFL comparison: Amp Lee, free agent
Third down-type back with great speed and quickness. Shows excellent vision as runner and uses feet and shifty style to pick up valuable yards between tackles. Does not possess much power as runner and is undersized but should develop into home run threat as nickel back. Shows great change of direction and does outstanding job of breaking in and out of cuts. Hands are better than average; shows good feel in passing game. Natural route runner with great acceleration to create separation from defenders. Has little potential as blocker because he lacks size and leverage. Has history of fumbling; must do better job of protecting ball if he is to contribute right away. Will never be workhorse but has chance to contribute as complementary runner and specialist in passing game. **Notable:** Only player in Ohio State history to rush for 500 yards in first three games of his career.
OVERALL GRADE: 23.0

9 Rondell Mealey, Louisiana Tech
5-11¼ 209 4.55
3rd round

NFL comparison: Travis Jervey, 49ers
Runs hard and hits hole with conviction. Not a power runner and has upright style. Breaks some tackles because he runs hard but doesn't run low enough to endure punishment between tackles. Has good speed and burst to break away in open field. Shows good second gear, and acceleration makes him more-intriguing prospect. Shows good lateral movement and slashing style. Has little experience in passing game, but running style is conducive to a third-down back. Should improve as receiver with more repetitions. Willing blocker with good instincts picking up blitz, but size is concern; has trouble anchoring vs. blitz. Has history of fumbling because he exposes ball to defenders. **Notable:** Appeared in every game over his four-year college career. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.5**

10 Chrys Chukwuma, Arkansas
6-0⅞ 207 4.52
3rd round

NFL comparison: Errict Rhett, Browns
One of most underrated backs in draft. Combines physical running style with good speed and change of direction. Hard runner with good power and body lean. Needs to develop better center of gravity as runner but does good job of lowering shoulder and running through defenders. Has some ability to bounce to outside but doesn't possess a lot of quickness or burst to hole. Has good feet and change of direction, which makes him threat as slashing, cutback-type runner. Is reliable back who holds onto ball and rarely loses yards. Not much of a contributor in passing game; has marginal hands and does not have great feel as route runner. Shows enough as blocker to play on passing downs. Picks up blitz well; size allows him to sit in and anchor vs. blitz. Has great strength but could use more bulk to become punishing inside runner. One major knock is work ethic and passion for game. **Notable:** Success in track and field limited his focus on football in college.
OVERALL GRADE: 22.5

11 Sammy Morris, Texas Tech
3rd round
6-0 228 4.68

NFL comparison: Kimble Anders, Chiefs
A bit of a 'tweener who has size to play fullback but running skills of halfback. Shows great leverage and plays with excellent center of gravity. Will break a lot of one-on-one tackles because of punishing style. Mostly an upfield guy with little change of direction and elusiveness but has great speed for size and has shown ability to get around corner. Reliable runner who protects ball and rarely gets thrown for loss. Has big upside as receiver because of soft hands and route-running ability. Threat in open field because of strength and speed. Shows some downfield ability in passing game and does good job of going up and catching ball in crowd. Has solid athletic ability, good feet and solid, lower-body build. **Notable:** Sat out '97 and '98 seasons because of academic problems.
OVERALL GRADE: 22.0

12 Demario Brown, Utah State
6-0⅜ 211 4.58
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Tyrone Wheatley, Raiders
Developmental-type back with good size and natural skills. Lacks great speed but shows good quickness and has slashing running style. Runs with good body lean and shows some power. Has shown good feel as inside runner with vision and patience. Has some burst to hole and delivers blow because of great pad leverage. Has good hands and some upside in passing game if he can improve skills as route runner. Solid blocker with good lower-body strength and ability to anchor vs. blitz. Needs to sustain blocks by using legs more to drive. Has had a lot of nicks over career and is labeled as guy with soft work ethic but seems to have rededicated himself to game. Has lot of potential if he improves technique and complementary skills. **Notable:** Scored 13 touchdowns in senior season.
OVERALL GRADE: 21.0

13 Trung Canidate, Arizona
5-11 190 4.45
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Warrick Dunn, Buccaneers
Shows good burst but is not real productive between tackles. Speed is greatest asset. Should become quality third-down back because of big-play potential. Has no problem getting around corner and shows great acceleration upfield. Has outstanding vision and does good job of hitting hole but is too light on feet and gets taken down too easily. Instinctive runner who is threat in open field. Average hands are concern because he'll need to contribute as receiver to emerge at next level. Does good job of running routes and is mismatch for most linebackers because of speed and agility. **Notable:** Named after a character in the 1976 movie *Green Eyes.*
OVERALL GRADE: 21.0

14 Doug Chapman, Marshall
5-10⅛ 209 4.45
4th round

NFL comparison: Duce Staley, Eagles
Speedster with good size and developmental skills. Has excellent strength and lower-body power but does not always run hard and tends to take a lot of shots to body because he gets sloppy. Has some instincts as inside runner. Can pick and slide because he has solid feet and change of direction. Shows good upfield burst and speed to turn corner. Has all the skills as runner but is not elusive enough and tends to go down too easily for a guy with such good body control and leverage. Has speed to develop into receiving threat, but hands are too stiff and still needs work as route runner. Has never shown much as blocking back and likely will not be asked to do much blocking in NFL. **Notable:** Read books to kids in elementary schools.
OVERALL GRADE: 20.5

15 Mike Anderson, Utah
5-11⅝ 230 4.69
4th round

NFL comparison: Bam Morris, retired
Strong, well-built runner with average speed and quickness. Shows some burst to hole and does nice job of waiting for blocks to develop. Looks like an inside runner but has some trouble picking and sliding. Instincts are not overly impressive. Tends to see things develop too late and winds up forcing himself into crease that already has closed. Biggest assets are contributions in passing game. Shows natural hands and feel for where to be as receiver out of backfield. Has shown some flair as downfield receiver and does good job of using body to get position. Not overly exciting as blocker. Has size and strength to contribute but has some trouble recognizing blitz; technique could use work. **Notable:** Played drums, not football, in high school. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

16 Curtis Keaton, James Madison
5-10 209 4.37
4th round

NFL comparison: Corey Dillon, Bengals
Scouts like his size and speed. Gets to hole quickly and shows decent vision to pick and slide. Does nice job of sinking hips and bending knees as runner. Lacks good power inside but has excellent feel for running game between tackles. Shows tremendous quickness and burst to outside and has enough change of direction to be creative cutback

runner. Has tendency to run too upright and will take lot of shots to the body at next level. Hands are solid, but route-running skills are just adequate. Needs to become more skilled in passing game if he is to contribute right away; speed and big-play potential are perfect fit for third-down receiver. Also needs to do better job of picking up blitz. As blocker, tends to wall off more than anchor and sustain. **Notable:** Began college career at West Virginia before transferring to James Madison. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

17 Kevin McDougal, Colorado State
5-10⅝ 202 4.63
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Lamont Warren, free agent

Not tremendously gifted but has excellent understanding of position and shows outstanding vision as runner. Speed is a concern. Is undersized and does not project as inside runner but does excellent job of picking and sliding between tackles. If there is a seam, he exploits it. Runs a bit upright but has outstanding feet and change of direction. Has naturally soft hands and has shown solid route-running skills. Is tough competitor but tends to wear down and has history of injuries. Produced at college level because of ability to wear down defenses, but does not possess the size to contribute as every-down back. **Notable:** Averaged 5.3 yards a carry as senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

18 Ronney Jenkins, N. Arizona *
5-11 175 4.39
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: David Palmer, Vikings

Undersized speedster with outstanding running skills. Has excellent vision as runner and has shown ability to pick and slide inside. Has great patience and hits hole with tremendous burst. Has outstanding feet and excellent change of direction. Biggest problem is lack of size and power as runner. Can't carry load and is taken down by too many arm tackles. Shows solid skills in passing game and has natural hands. Only chance at next level is as nickel back and situational speed back. A threat in open field who has ability to create because of outstanding body control as runner. Does not offer a lot as blocker because of size. Contributions in passing game will come as receiver. **Notable:** Had 619-yard, seven-touchdown game in high school. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

19 Derrick Foster, Tex. A&M-Kingsv.
6-0 193 4.39
5th round

NFL comparison: Curtis Martin, Jets

Small-school prospect with outstanding pure speed and athleticism. Tall, slender player with technically sound running style. Doesn't have a lot of inside running skills for next level. Slashing back with outstanding change of direction and feel for what's developing in front of him. Could stand to add some bulk to contribute more between tackles. Can turn corner easily and shows excellent upfield burst. Has second gear in open field but gets taken down by too many arm tackles and likely incapable of bulling over defender at NFL level. Has natural hands but is a bit stiff in routes and needs to gain better feel for passing game. Hips not as loose as they need to be. Has some trouble adjusting to poorly thrown balls. **Notable:** Was Division II track and field All-American in 55 meters (indoors) and 100 meters (outdoors). **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

20 Thomas Hamner, Minnesota
5-11¾ 186 4.59
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Ron Rivers, free agent

Productive college back with great feel for running game. Sees things develop and shows excellent patience as runner. Runs with good mechanics; always keeps knees high and drives. Is undersized and doesn't have enough speed to make impact at next level. Quick feet and change of direction will help but is no longer a home run threat. Has good, soft hands and great feel as receiver in the flat or on screen passes. A shifty runner with solid explosion but needs to add bulk and improve his 40 time—a difficult task. **Notable:** Led Minnesota in rushing in each of his four seasons. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.5.**

21 Darren Davis, Iowa State
5-7⅞ 190 4.73
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Kevin Faulk, Patriots

Undersized runner who is more quick than fast. Patient runner with great vision and body control. Plays low to ground and does excellent job of leaning forward as runner. Tough, with great change of direction and cutback ability. Slasher with good inside running skills because of ability to pick and slide. Lacks size and power to succeed as every-down back. Has good enough hands to emerge as receiving threat. **Notable:** Brother of Saints running back and former Iowa State star Troy Davis. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

22 Rashon Spikes, NC State
5-10½ 212 4.55
6th round

NFL comparison: Ahman Green, Seahawks

Shows quick feet, tremendous burst and runs with good body lean. Never seemed to put it all together in college because effort was inconsistent. Has enough speed for size and shows enough acceleration in and out of cuts to make it as runner at next level. Needs to become more of an all-around back. Shows decent hands but is not polished route runner and seems lost in passing game at times. Shows little passion or skill as blocker. Has size to match up but tends to be soft and rarely anchors in vs. blitz. **Notable:** Lists being a barber as his best non-athletic talent. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.5**

23 Dante Hall, Texas A&M
5-7¾ 190 4.55
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: John Avery, Broncos

Undersized with only average speed, but burst and quickness are phenomenal. Sees entire field and does good job of picking hole and attacking inside. Is tough guy for his size and never runs with hesitation. Shows good acceleration to sideline and gets upfield. Has good hands and polished route-running skills. Size hurts him in passing game because he's non-factor as blocker. Gets bulled over too often when he steps up to pick up blitz and doesn't stand chance in NFL as pass blocker. **Notable:** Only player in A&M history with more than 2,000 career rushing yards and more than 500 career yards in both punt and kickoff returns. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.0**

24 Chad Morton, Southern Cal
5-7¾ 187 4.50
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: Sirr Parker, Panthers

Shifty, elusive-type back with little power as runner. Superb open-field runner because of quick feet and excellent hips. Has trouble inside tackles. Too light on feet. Not enough lower-body strength to compete at next level. Shows good vision and runs low to ground. Has better than average hands and could contribute in passing game as nickel back. Speed is not impressive. Dances too much to succeed in NFL. Offers little as blocker and doesn't have size or natural speed to project as return specialist. **Notable:** Brother of Lions wide receiver Johnnie Morton. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.0.**

25 Anthony White, Kentucky
6-0⅛ 190 4.60
7th round

NFL comparison: Derek Loville, Broncos

Average measurables and speed, but quickness, burst and vision make him interesting prospect. Quick to hole. Shows toughness and change of direction inside. Has burst to outside and does fine job of finding crease and attacking it. Soft hands and excellent route-running ability make receiving his biggest asset. Willing blocker with good strength but needs to be more aggressive and use more leverage vs. blitz. **Notable:** One of three players in NCAA history to have more than 1,500 career yards both rushing and receiving. **OVERALL GRADE: 14.0**

26 Destry Wright, Jackson State
5-11 208 4.60
7th round

NFL comparison: Sedrick Shaw, Bengals

Has good size and quickness. Speed is better than listed. Runs with solid leg drive and body lean. Could become better pick-and-slide guy inside. Needs to use strength more as runner to punish defenders. Has center of gravity to develop into slashing, cutback runner. Extremely raw as receiver and blocker. Has natural hands but does not understand passing game and does poor job of running routes out of backfield. **Notable:** Holds single-season (1,644) and career (4,050) rushing records at Walter Payton's alma mater. **OVERALL GRADE: 14.0.**

Others: Troy Hambrick, Savannah State, 5-11⅞, 234, 4.71; Brandon Walker, East Tennessee State, 5-9⅝, 198, 5.59; Ketric Sanford, Houston, 5-7⅝, 201, 4.66; Rodnick Phillips, Southern Methodist, 5-11¾, 212, 4.61; Keith Brown, UCLA, 5-11, 214, 4.60; Morgan Kane, Wake Forest, 6-0, 220, 4.65; Steve Havard, Illinois, 5-10, 200, 4.60.

TSN Player Ratings

Fullbacks

OVERRATED
Dan Kendra, Florida State
Former quarterback has all the tools, but can he adjust to fullback position in the pros? Needs a lot of work.

UNDERRATED
Aaron Shea, Michigan
Converted tight end shows enough versatility to contribute. Team that drafts him will be pleased with final result.

SLEEPER
Mondriel Fulcher, Miami
A better athlete than most realize. Has excellent potential as a pass catcher. Versatility and work ethic are top-notch.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Joey Goodspeed, Notre Dame
Dominating run blocker who continues to improve his footwork and speed. Progress has been slowed by injury.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Matt Keller, Ohio State
Injuries and lack of consistency on the field worry most teams. Will be lucky to maintain third-round rating.

What scouts are looking for

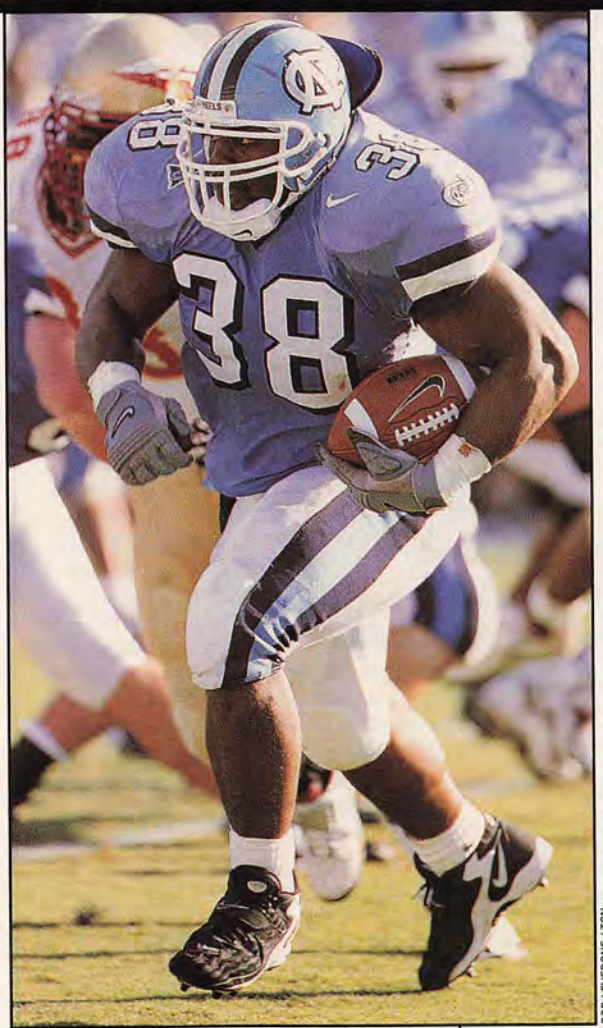
NFL Average	Hgt.	Wgt.	40	NFL Minimum	Hgt.	Wgt.	40
	6-0	235	4.65		5-10	230	4.80

There are two types of fullbacks in today's NFL. One is the big, physical player who does little but block; he is most attractive to teams that use a power run game or have a franchise running back. Fullbacks like Denver's Howard Griffith, Tennessee's Lorenzo Neal and Buffalo's Sam Gash rarely carry the ball, but they are devastating lead blockers for the marquee backs who follow them through the hole. But this type of fullback limits what a team does offensively. If he can't run or catch, defenses will know that when he's in the game, it will be a running play. The second type of fullback (and probably more popular) is a smaller player who is more versatile. He can catch, has some running skills and knows how to position block—almost like an oversized running back. He is not as physical, but teams can't key on him in any particular area. For example, Larry Centers rarely runs with the ball or blocks, but he is actively involved in the Redskins' passing game as a receiver out of the backfield. The Cardinals made a huge mistake when they let him slip away as a free agent a year ago. These types of fullbacks are hard to find, and when you get one, you must keep him. For years, the 49ers prospered with fullbacks like Tom Rathman, tough guys who also were productive in the passing game.

Although there are many prospects at fullback, there isn't one standout. Deon Dyer projects as the top player because of his all-around skills and proficiency as a lead blocker.

Fullbacks are not typically high picks, and though this year should be no exception, there are some who could sneak up on teams' boards because of their athletic potential. This group offers several developmental-type players, headed by Penn State's Aaron Harris and Florida State's Dan Kendra, both excellent athletes who have been hampered by injuries.

Michigan's Aaron Shea looks to be the one player who could contribute right away as a blocker and receiver. Shea is a converted tight end with outstanding receiving skills and has the potential to emerge as a Pro Bowl-type player.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

BRUISER: *Dyer won't wow anyone with his speed, but as a lead blocker he has few peers.*

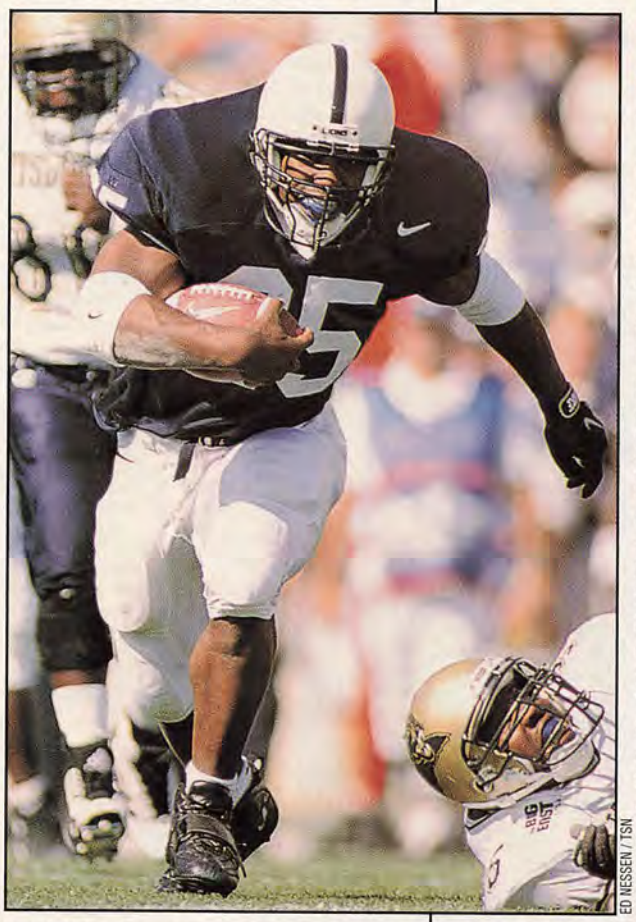
1 Deon Dyer, North Carolina
5-11 264 4.98 (40 time)
2nd round

NFL comparison: Sam Gash, Bills
Inside runner: Powerful runner with excellent leverage and explosion. Keeps feet moving and legs high. Has strength to move the pile. Asset in short yardage, especially near goal line. **Grade: 6.5**
Outside runner: Shows some quickness and burst but does not have speed to turn corner. More of a straight-line runner with little change of direction. Tough to bring down in open field because of his power but is not elusive enough to break tackles with his feet. **Grade: 4.0**
Blocker: Devastating lead blocker. Gets shoulders square and delivers blow with outstanding base. Could use more leg drive and has some trouble sustaining blocks. A classic NFL isolation blocker. Knows the angles and excellent at getting in position. **Grade: 6.5**
Hands/routes: Above-average receiver. Has reliable hands and feel for routes but does not excel in either area. A bit stiff as a route runner. Does not come back to the ball or make great catches, but skills are sufficient to be a swing-back. **Grade: 5.0**
Durability: Tough player with great center of gravity and steady motor. Does not take many hits in legs. Missed little action because of injury. **Grade: 6.5**
Notable: Blocked way to Senior Bowl, averaging just over 3 yards per carry.
Final analysis: The drop-off is big after Dyer. Not a first-rounder, though he could go early because he is clearly the premier player. Punishing as isolation blocker with natural running skills and above-average hands out of backfield. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

2 Matt Keller, Ohio St.
5-10 235 4.65
3rd round

NFL comparison: Larry Centers, Redskins
Undersized and athletic with excellent receiving skills. Willing lead blocker with good strength. Does not show much leverage as blocker and struggles against bigger, physical inside linebackers. Has trouble sustaining blocks. Durable, hard-worker who understands position. Threat out of backfield because of size/speed combination. Has some inside running skills but not much of a short-yardage runner. Shows excellent change of direction and quick feet as runner and blocker. Something of a wild card because he has little experience carrying the ball. Ability to be lead blocker and short-yardage runner are concerns. **Notable:** Injuries limited him to 16 carries, eight catches as a senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.0**

3 Aaron Shea, Michigan
6-3¾ 256 4.80
3rd round
NFL comparison: Bob Christian, Falcons
Good inside power as runner but not a short-yardage runner. Can pick and slide and is quick to the hole but has poor vision as runner. Has some speed to corner and tools and feet to change direction but is more of a straight-line runner. Hands are biggest asset. Excellent feel for passing game. Runs excellent routes and shows outstanding concentration as receiver. Blocking has improved tremendously but has trouble picking up blitz. Should improve with more experience. Converted tight end with big upside. Could be one of the more underrated players in draft. Has tools to be solid lead blocker and hands as good as any at fullback. **Notable:** Converted from tight end to fullback before '99 season. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**


ED MESSEN / TSN

INTRIGUING: *If Harris' injuries are a thing of the past, he might have a bright future in the NFL.*

4 Durrell Price, UCLA
5-11 240 4.75
3rd round
NFL comparison: Terry Kirby, Browns
Undersized and inexperienced with great complementary skills. Not a dominating lead blocker but shows good toughness and mobility. Takes excellent angles in pursuit and gets great position. Adjusts on the move and has speed and quickness to seal off the linebacker. Solid inside runner because of leg strength and vision but does not show great power as short-yardage runner. Has speed to get to corner but is not much of a threat in open field. Biggest attribute is receiving skills; shows top-flight hands and great feel for routes and responsibilities. Needs to add bulk and upper body strength to be solid lead blocker. Good feel for position in limited time. **Notable:** Holds UCLA record for bench press (436.5 pounds). **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

5 Terrelle Smith, Arizona State
6-1 235 4.75
4th round
NFL comparison: Tommy Vardell, retired
Intriguing prospect because of height/speed combination. Straight-line runner but shows good quickness and speed. Runs hard with a good burst but plays too upright and takes too many hits. Has good understanding of position and takes excellent angles in pursuit. Quick enough to seal off linebackers. More productive as edge blocker than in-line, isolation blocker. Hands are sufficient and shows good feel for passing game. Threat in open field because of speed, quickness and size. Needs to bulk up to contribute as inside blocker. Better pass blocker because he picks up blitz well and can anchor at point of attack. Catching attention because of size, speed and blocking potential if he adds strength to lower body. Could move up draft boards because of natural skills as outside runner and receiver. **Notable:** Moved from linebacker to fullback in spring of '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

6 Aaron Harris, Penn State
5-11⅛ 231 4.60
4th round
NFL comparison: Charles Way, Giants
Solid inside and outside runner with tremendous potential if he stays healthy. Has great size and speed and all the skills to contribute. Shows good burst to the hole, vision as a runner and is threat in open field. Has good second burst. Possesses good toughness, power and strength in upper and lower body. A bit stiff but can flat-out run. Has power to develop into solid blocker but needs to work on technique and angles. Shows good feet and can adjust on move. Durability a concern because of history of knee injuries. If his knees check out and he improves overall technique, he could contribute right away. Intriguing prospect with great natural running skills. Hard to take down in open field. Solid enough skills to make him a receiving threat. **Notable:** Rebounded from severe knee injury in sophomore year. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

7 Paul Smith, Texas-El Paso
5-10⅞ 226 4.60
5th round
NFL comparison: Leroy Hoard, free agent
College running back who projects as fullback. Powerful runner with great burst to the hole. Needs work on vision and patience as runner but has lower body strength to handle short-yardage carries. Catches ball well and has good feel in passing game. Speed a big asset and makes him a threat in open field. Has natural hands and good concentration as receiver but not much experience as blocker. Has strength and leg drive to develop with more coaching and experience. Shows great toughness and excellent work ethic. Is more skill-oriented. Could contribute right away because of hands, speed and feel in passing game. Durability a question; needs to prove he is over a once career-threatening knee injury. **Notable:** Finished college with 2,539 rushing yards. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

8 Mondriel Fulcher, Miami (Fla.)
6-2¼ 235 4.75
5th round
NFL comparison: Jim Kleinsasser, Vikings
A 'tweener who projects as fullback. Solid athlete with good speed and agility. Plays well on his feet and runs hard with the ball. Too upright as inside runner but shows great burst and vision. Can pick and slide but needs to run with better leverage. Good hands and natural receiving ability. Can make adjustments to the ball away from him and runs routes well. Has tremendous potential as a receiving back but needs more experience. Lacks bulk as inside blocker but has good feel for picking up blitz and gets in great position. Shows good quickness and adjusts well on the move. More of a wall-off blocker but has room to add bulk and could contribute as isolation blocker with added strength. Has huge upside as possible H-back because of feel for passing game, versatility and work ethic. **Notable:** Had only three carries as senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

9 Mike Green, Houston
5-11⅝ 244 4.84
6th round
NFL comparison: Aaron Craver, Saints
Big, bruising runner who projects as fullback. Does not have great speed but shows some quickness and change of direction for player his size. Tough runner between

SPOTLIGHT
DAN KENDRA

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

"He was getting to where he was knocking people out, including himself," says Florida State offensive coordinator Mark Richt. "He would hit people so hard, the collisions were so nasty, that both guys were getting to where they couldn't stand up."

Richt is talking about the Seminoles' starting fullback last season, Dan Kendra. Kendra, who began his career at Florida State as a quarterback, began playing fullback only in spring practice last year, but started 11 of 12 games and helped lead the team to a national championship. Though his imposing and impressive physical abilities—he's 6-0, 257, runs well and was FSU's strongest player—aided his transition, there were a few hurdles.

"Early in the season as a run blocker, he was running right through people, just clobbering them," says Richt. "But he wasn't using good judgment—he was leading too much with his head."

As the season went on, though, he improved. He began to recognize when to cut block or go head-to-head with his man. A cut, for instance, can be more effective against blitzing linebackers because it will knock the player off his feet.

With the help of his strength and athleticism, Kendra became one of Florida State's top pass-protection backs in years. As a former quarterback, he knew the rules of pass protection. Physically, he was strong enough to stop a charging linebacker.

He has good hands for a big back and, as the season progressed, improved his route-running and keeping his stride while catching the ball on the run. Still, he has a long way to go, especially with his techniques and knowing when to use them.

Kendra's quarterbacking days ended during FSU's spring game in April 1998, when he tore the ACL in his right knee. Instead of winning the starting job (he was the favorite before the injury), he missed the entire season. When he started playing again this past spring, Chris Weinke was entrenched as the starter and Kendra and coach Bobby Bowden decided on the switch to fullback.

Kendra was such a ballyhooed quarterback in high school, THE SPORTING NEWS ranked him ahead of fellow prep stars Randy Moss and Florida State teammate Peter Warrick. But Kendra never fit the quarterback mold. He does, however, have the perfect temperament for a fullback—he's extremely physical and won't shy away from contact. It could take a year or two, but he has the potential to be one of the NFL's top fullbacks.—*Mark Bonavita*

tackles who could contribute as short-yardage runner. Does not run with great burst but lowers shoulders well and picks up extra yardage with great lower body strength and leg drive. Solid receiver out of backfield with reliable hands. Shows good feel as a receiver and runs good swing and flat routes but not a threat in open field. Will need a lot of work as blocker. Has size and strength to improve but needs to play with better technique and sustain blocks more consistently. More of a raw prospect who will need time in right system to develop. **Notable:** Averaged 6 yards per carry, scored eight TDs in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.5**

10 Dan Kendra, Florida State
6-0 257 4.65
6th round

NFL comparison: Kevin Turner, free agent

Former quarterback with tremendous raw talent and physical skills. Excellent athlete with great strength and speed. Has explosiveness and power to develop into solid isolation blocker, but technique and understanding of position are concerns. Huge project with tremendous upside. Does not explode well out of stance and too inconsistent as blocker. Needs to take better angles and get into position better. Shows adequate hands as receiver and is threat in open field because of size and speed. **Notable:** Was nation's top quarterback coming out of high school. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

11 Joey Goodspeed, Notre Dame
6-0 239 4.89
6th round

NFL comparison: Clif Groce, Bengals

Powerful lead blocker who plays with great base and leverage. Better run blocker than pass blocker. Attacks line of scrimmage and does excellent job of uprooting the linebacker in the hole. Knows how to lower shoulder and sustain blocks. Needs a lot of work as runner. Plays too upright and takes too many hits to the lower body when carrying the ball. Has potential as in-line runner because of lower body strength but needs work on vision and change of direction. Has marginal hands and poor feel in passing game. Needs to do better job of looking the ball in and improve route running. One of the more natural lead blockers but a one-dimensional player. **Notable:** Slowed overall by separated shoulder from '97. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.0**

12 Terry Witherspoon, Clemson
5-11⅜ 253 4.59
7th round

NFL comparison: Zack Crockett, Raiders

Possesses excellent measurables, including size/speed combination, but not a polished player. Plays with great leverage and takes excellent angles as blocker. Works to sustain blocks and does good job picking up blitz. Shows little feel as receiver, and hands are suspect. Drops too many easy balls and a bit stiff in his routes. Has size to develop into short-yardage runner but lacks vision and patience as runner. Big, bruising back with great speed for his size but still has a lot of work to do. Should be outstanding lead blocker with great base and lower body strength. Needs to become more flexible athlete. **Notable:** Can bench press 417 pounds. **OVERALL GRADE: 14.0**

Others: Dan Murphy, Central Washington, 6-1, 220, 4.76; Ricky Brown, Texas, 5-10¼, 224, 4.60; Dan Kreider, New Hampshire, 5-11½, 242, 4.76; Josh White, California, 5-11¼, 256, 4.80; Anthony Southern, Virginia, 5-10⅞, 233, 4.88; Anthony Green, West Virginia, 6-0⅞, 247, 4.75.

TSN Player Ratings

Wide Receivers

OVERRATED
Sylvester Morris, Jackson State
Raw talent who needs more time than most think. Marginal route-running skills displayed so far won't cut it in the pros.

UNDERRATED
Dez White, Georgia Tech
Has the size, speed and strength to contribute immediately. Made Joe Hamilton look good more than once at Ga. Tech.

SLEEPER
Darrell Jackson, Florida
A technically sound route runner with excellent quickness and hands. Overshadowed in college by Travis Taylor.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Ron Dugans, Florida State
Sharp route runner who could start as a complementary receiver right away. Solid, not spectacular.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
R. Jay Soward, Southern California
Mental toughness and passion for the game are major concerns for NFL scouts. So are his off-field troubles.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-0	180	4.52	NFL Minimum	5-8½	170	4.65

Each team would like to have wide receivers with speed, but there are not enough of them to fill every roster need. If a player doesn't have great speed, then he must have great quickness. The ability to separate from a defender is critical in the NFL. There are a lot of receivers who have speed but can't separate, and there are a lot of possession guys who lack great speed but have good quickness and can separate. In today's game, wide receivers must also be physical enough to get off the jam and catch in traffic. As surprising as it may seem, good hands and the ability to snatch the ball are sometimes underrated when scouts look at a receiver's measurables. If you can't catch the ball consistently, you can't play. Size is also more critical than it used to be. Big wideouts cause huge matchup problems for cornerbacks, especially in the red zone. The days of run-and-shoot offenses and "smurf" receivers are gone. In nickel packages that feature three wide receivers, at least one needs to be a speed guy who can stretch a defense, as Randy Moss can. It also requires an inside receiver who is physical and has the ability to separate, get open and make first downs. Cris Carter is a perfect example of this. He is physically tough, but also smart and savvy, and he knows how to adjust routes and read defenses on the move.

Teams don't typically like to use a first-round pick on a wideout, but as many as five could go in the first round. This year's receiving crop is one of the deepest in recent history. Florida State's Peter Warrick is the elite of the class, but the talent level does not drop off dramatically after him.

This year's class is intriguing because the more complete athletes may get drafted after players who have more potential. Plaxico Burress (Michigan State), Travis Taylor (Florida), Sylvester Morris and Dez White all will receive first-round consideration. And even though Burress and Morris do not grade out as high as Taylor and White, their size and upside push them ahead.

This class also features a few polished receivers who project as solid possession-type guys. Ron Dugans (Florida State), Kwame Cavil (Texas) and Darrell Jackson (Florida) do not offer much in the vertical passing game, but scouts love their route-running skills.

The player whose draft status fluctuates most is Florida State's Laveranues Coles. He has the best speed and ability of the bunch, but his off-field troubles and character questions make teams leery.

***Denotes underclassman.**

1 Peter Warrick, Florida State
5-10⅝ 196 4.48 (40 time)
1st round

NFL comparison: Jerry Rice, 49ers

Hands: Exceptional hand-eye coordination and concentration. Rarely drops a pass. Can elevate and snatch in a crowd. Does an excellent job catching the ball at highest point. Has bigger hands than body would indicate. Catches away from body and pulls it in with one quick motion. **Grade: 7.5**

Patterns: Underrated route runner. Exceptional quicks and body control. Elite burst in and out of cuts. Understands passing game and knows where to be. Has speed and separation of top vertical receiver and sharp movement, vision, quick hips and excellent feet of celebrated possession receiver. **Grade: 7.5**

Run after catch: Will become best in league after the catch. All the tools and tremendous body control. Undersized, but runs hard enough and plays low enough to ground to pick up extra yardage. **Grade: 7.5**

Release: Rarely gets jammed because of exceptional feet. Shows outstanding double moves off line and uses hands well to create separation. May have trouble vs. bigger, physical corners but is too quick to get jammed. **Grade: 6.5**

Blocking: Not asked to do much at Florida State but has shown flashes. Undersized, but has good strength and gets in excellent position. More of wall-off type who uses quickness to shield defenders from play. **Grade: 5.0**

Notable: Graduated in December with degree in political science.

Final analysis: Unquestionably top athlete in draft with chance to become all-time great.

OVERALL GRADE: 34.0

2 Travis Taylor, Florida*
6-1 200 4.48
1st round

NFL comparison: Antonio Freeman, Packers

Hands: Soft hands, excellent concentration. Natural pass catcher. Shows ability to elevate and snatch. Rarely lets ball get to body. **Grade: 7.0**

Patterns: Natural feel as route runner. Excellent body control and deceptive burst. Needs work on explosion in and out of cuts. Knows how to use body to get position and shows excellent second gear when chasing ball vertically. Tough player who will go over middle and sacrifice his body. **Grade: 6.5**

Run after catch: Playmaker. Is not exceptionally fast but has good moves in open field and deceptive quickness. Big, physical runner who uses strong stiff arm. **Grade: 6.0**

Release: Intelligent; knows how to create separation off line. Shows good first and second moves. Good initial quickness and burst. Uses hands well to fight off defender in press coverage. **Grade: 6.0**

Blocking: Effort blocker with strength. Gets solid position and works downfield. Has added bulk and should develop into competitive blocker. **Grade: 6.0**

Notable: Only player to win consecutive MVP awards in bowl games (1998 Orange, 1999 Florida Citrus).

Final analysis: Complete package, with size, speed and quickness. Best attribute is understanding of position. Projects as an outstanding possession receiver who should be threat in intermediate zone.

OVERALL GRADE: 31.5

3 Plaxico Burress, Michigan State*
6-6 230 4.6
1st round

NFL comparison: Randy Moss, Vikings

Hands: Better-than-average but needs more consistency. Allows ball to get into body too often. Will make acrobatic catches but loses concentration. **Grade: 6.0**

Patterns: Lots of work needed. Uses great frame well to establish position but needs to sharpen routes. Long strider who is capable of gaining separation in vertical passing game. Does well elevating for jump ball. Catches in stride. **Grade: 5.5**

Run after catch: Decent speed and surprising elusiveness for size. Tough for defenders to bring down in open field. Shows good burst and second gear. **Grade: 6.5**

Release: Marginal quickness but shows strength and gains speed as he goes. Size makes it hard for defenders to jam him. Good first and second moves but will not lose many corners with moves and quickness. **Grade: 6.5**

Blocking: Willing blocker with potential because of size. Good strength. Can take corners and safeties out of play with size and long arms. **Grade: 6.0**

Notable: Blocked 22 punts in his high school career.

Final analysis: Not most talented or polished receiver in draft but has proven to be big-play guy and nightmare to match up against.

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

Lots of areas to work on but scouts love his size and potential. **OVERALL GRADE: 30.5**

4 Dez White, Georgia Tech*
6-0 215 4.5
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Carl Pickens, Bengals
Hands: Reliable receiver with few drops but technique is not impressive. Lets too many balls get into body. Doesn't snatch well. Excellent concentration but needs work on catching ball away from body. **Grade: 5.5**
Patterns: Has tools to become great route runner. Excellent strength, size and body control, but sloppy. Excellent burst but needs to translate that into cuts. Has been more of a downfield and seam receiver. **Grade: 5.5**
Run after catch: Excellent pure runner with tremendous acceleration. Quick feet and outstanding change of direction. Catches ball in stride and explodes upfield. **Grade: 7.0**
Release: Gets off line well. Possesses size and quick feet to break from press coverage. One of tougher receivers to jam because of all-around tools and measurables. **Grade: 6.5**
Blocking: Must improve technique but shows willingness and works at it. Has size and strength. More of wall-off blocker. **Grade: 6.0**
Notable: Uncle, Adrian White, played in NFL for Giants, Packers and Patriots.
Final analysis: One of most underrated players in draft. Extremely tough to cover man-to-man and creates mismatches with speed and strength. With improved intermediate route-running skills, could be great.
OVERALL GRADE: 30.5

5 Laveranues Coles, Florida State
5-11⅜ 190 4.29
2nd round

NFL comparison: Jimmy Smith, Jaguars
Hands: Inconsistent. Good technique but tends to look upfield before sealing off ball. **Grade: 5.5**
Patterns: As talented as anyone at position but lacks polish. Shows ability to separate. Exciting receiver underneath as well as in vertical game but needs to refine route running. Excellent burst in and out of cuts. Has hips to turn defenders around but gets sloppy and takes plays off. Needs to work harder in intermediate area. More of an outside-the-hashmarks-type who does not like to sacrifice body over middle. **Grade: 5.5**
Run after catch: Tremendous skills. Combines track-star speed with excellent quickness and feel for open field. Threat every time he touches ball. **Grade: 7.5**
Release: All the tools. Beat corners off line with quickness and strength but can improve. Doesn't use hands or sell first move well. **Grade: 5.5**
Blocking: Surprisingly aggressive. Has good strength for size and does good job keeping feet moving. **Grade: 6.5**
Notable: Nicknamed "Trouble" because he kept his mother in labor for four days and moved whenever doctors prepared for a C-section.
Final analysis: Stud who possesses potential, but coaches and scouts worry about off-field troubles and the fact he was not well-liked by teammates. **OVERALL GRADE: 30.5**

6 Sylvester Morris, Jackson State
6-3 206 4.41
1st round

NFL comparison: Herman Moore, Lions
Hands: Solid hands and keeps ball from body. Good wingspan and catches ball at its highest point. Not real snatcher but has soft hands and looks ball in. **Grade: 6.5**
Patterns: Could use work. Great straight-line speed but needs to do better job bursting in and out of routes. Tends to round off routes. Uses great size to his advantage. Has gotten away with marginal route-running skills—thus far. **Grade: 6.0**

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

HE'S GOT HOPS: *Cavil is a spectacular leaper who has won several slam dunk competitions.*

Run after catch: Tough in open field because of size/strength/speed combination. Lacks quickness and exceptional burst but a long strider with separating speed. **Grade: 6.0**
Release: All the tools but needs practice. Strength vs. press and uses hands well; needs to develop moves. **Grade: 6.0**
Blocking: Lacks understanding of responsibilities. Seems lost. Possesses size and should develop. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Known as "The Cat," for both his first name and his last.
Final analysis: Popular sleeper on many draft boards who might be overrated. Great measurables and natural receiving skills but needs polish. **OVERALL GRADE: 30.0**

7 R. Jay Soward, Southern California
5-9⅞ 170 4.40
2nd round

NFL comparison: Terry Glenn, Patriots
Hands: Makes tough catches but consistency is iffy. Shows flashes of excellent hands. **Grade: 5.5**
Patterns: Excellent acceleration in and out of breaks. Turns defenders around and shows loose hips. Good burst and quickness; shows flash in routes. Looks natural. More of deep threat but has skills to develop as go-to guy with improved consistency. **Grade: 6.0**
Run after catch: Breakaway speed and exceptional quickness. Threat every time he touches ball. Great vision. Catches ball in stride. Won't break many tackles. **Grade: 7.5**
Release: Outstanding quickness and initial moves. Beats press coverage with feet. Not physical but uses hands well to establish position off line. Will have difficulty against bigger, physical corners. **Grade: 6.0**
Blocking: Not willing combatant. Lacks size or strength to contribute much. Will wall off at times but consistency and effort are poor. **Grade: 4.0**
Notable: Brother, Marcus, was defensive back at Arizona State.
Final analysis: Has tools to develop into game breaker. Doesn't show intermediate-range promise but is big-play threat. Off-field troubles and lack of consistent effort are biggest concerns. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

8 Ron Dugans, Florida State
6-1⅛ 203 4.48
2nd round

NFL comparison: Keenan McCardell, Jaguars
Hands: Reliable with solid hands and good concentration. Excellent snatching ability and looks ball in. **Grade: 6.5**
Patterns: Tough with excellent intermediate skills. Runs outstanding, crisp patterns. Does best work on hitches, curls and comeback routes. Underrated vertical threat with solid speed and good acceleration. Uses size to advantage and gets great position. **Grade: 6.5**
Run after catch: Breaks tackles and tough to bring down because of size. Adequate burst and separation speed. **Grade: 6.0**
Release: Surprisingly quick off line and does good job against physical coverage. Has size and strength but needs to be more physical. Good first and second moves. **Grade: 5.0**
Blocking: Adequate. Not physical enough. Gets in good position and walls off well. Must sustain blocks better. **Grade: 4.5**
Notable: Like teammate Peter Warrick, earned political science degree (spring '99).
Final analysis: Impressive all-around receiver was overshadowed by Warrick. Could be biggest shocker of group. Will contribute in first year because of skills and confidence.
OVERALL GRADE: 28.5

9 Kwame Cavil, Texas
6-2 200 4.50
2nd round

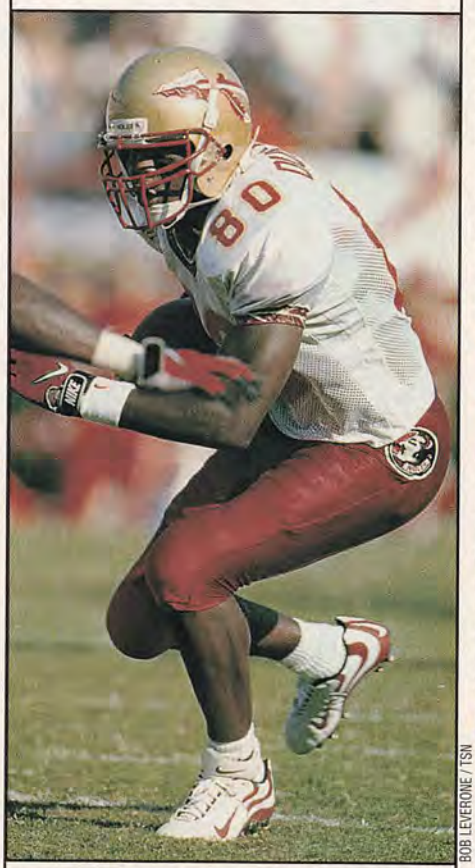
NFL comparison: Cris Carter, Vikings
Hands: Sturdy, possession-type wideout. Keeps ball from body. Excellent concentration. Will catch ball in traffic. Unspectacular, but catches everything in area. **Grade: 6.0**
Patterns: Excellent feel as possession receiver but also has speed and agility of big-play guy. Works to get downfield and shows burst in and out of routes. No discernible weaknesses. **Grade: 6.5**

Run after catch: Speed, size and strength make him tough to tackle in open field. Not explosive after catch but shows acceleration and ability to separate when on run. **Grade: 5.5**
Release: Uses body well to gain separation off line. Shows quick feet and good use of hands. Lacks great first and second moves but will improve. **Grade: 5.5**
Blocking: Competitive blocker with size and strength. Technique is poor; needs to use legs better to drive. Works at it. More of a wall-off type. **Grade: 5.0**
Notable: Education major; served as mentor at Austin elementary and middle schools.
Final analysis: Great size, strength, speed and hands. Has understanding of position and works hard. Steady player who has room to improve. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

10 Darrell Jackson, Florida
6-0 200 4.5
2nd or 3rd round
NFL comparison: O.J. McDuffie, Dolphins
Quicker than fast. Shows upside because of strength and route-running ability. Runs hard, crisp routes and shows excellent feel against zones. Works hard to sell routes. Hands are solid, can snatch and shows concentration. Has trouble with balls thrown below waist. Excellent body control and burst in and out of cuts. Adequate acceleration after catch. Not home-run threat but elusive enough in open field to create running room. Excellent vision as runner. Gives good effort as blocker but technique needs improvement. Tough receiver who will come over middle and catch in traffic. Burst on scene last year when counterpart Travis Taylor missed time with injury. Outstanding possession receiver who has shown flashes as big-play maker. Somewhat unknown, but skills are underrated. Should be able to contribute quickly. **Notable:** Set national career prep record by averaging 24.1 yards per catch. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.0**

11 Sherrod Gideon, Southern Miss
5-11⅞ 177 4.61
2nd or 3rd round
NFL comparison: Bert Emanuel, Buccaneers
Solid hands and does nice job catching ball from body and looking it in. Not skilled route runner but has great quickness, burst and upside. Adequate deep speed and shows ability to separate. Excellent quickness off line and rarely gets caught against press coverage. May struggle against bigger, physical corners due to lack of size and marginal strength. Excellent feel and does good job in intermediate zone. Shies from contact and is not much of contributor over middle. Does not add much as blocker and does not put body on people. Lack of toughness is concern. Tools to develop as playmaker. Good speed and excellent quickness, but lack of strength and approach to game are concerns. Has upside, but now is one-dimensional, deep-threat-type. **Notable:** Holds every Southern Miss season and career receiving record. **OVERALL GRADE: 26.0**

12 Danny Farmer, UCLA
6-3 205 4.60
3rd or 4th round
NFL comparison: Ed McCaffrey, Broncos
Soft hands and good concentration. Works to get in and out of routes. Excellent quickness for size. Does great job turning around defender with hard moves to inside and outside. Creates mismatches because of size/quickness ratio. Has enough speed to separate but is not deep threat. Gets open in intermediate area by running crisp routes; has great understanding of coverage. Excellent ball skills; can elevate to snatch in air. Not overly elusive but works hard in open field and does well picking up extra yardage. Shows promise and works hard as blocker. Productive receiver with good feel for game. Uses size and quickness to get open. Lacks breakaway speed, but shows flashes as vertical threat. Should develop into solid possession receiver. **Notable:** Member of UCLA's varsity volleyball team. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.5**



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

LOOK AT ME: *Dugans (above) actually had a higher yards-per-catch average than Peter Warrick last year.*

13 Dennis Northcutt, Arizona
5-10⅛ 169 4.45
3rd or 4th round
NFL comparison: Tony Simmons, Patriots
Reliable hands. Runs crisp, smooth routes but lacks natural skills to make huge impact. Shifty receiver with adequate quickness and agility. Quicker than fast but has trouble against press coverage. Not a vertical threat. Decent speed but shows little game-breaking flash and lacks size. Projects as complementary third receiver. Productivity in college was impressive, but size and speed limitations will be difficult to overcome. **Notable:** Finalist for Mosi Tatupu Award (nation's best special teams player). **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

14 Anthony Lucas, Arkansas
6-2⅝ 197 4.51
4th round
NFL comparison: Amani Toomer, Giants
Good hands but concentration seems spotty. Big, powerful receiver with good body control. Not much of route runner. Lacks burst in and out of breaks. Hips are stiff. Average quickness off line. Adequate speed but not threat to stretch field. Tough player who will go over middle. Plays ball well in air and shows flair after catch because of excellent vision. Willing blocker; has tools to improve. Classically built possession receiver with good hands, marginal speed and modest quickness. Never will be playmaker but should develop into productive receiver and go-to-guy. **Notable:** Active in Arkansas Athletes Outreach and member of SEC Good Works Team. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

15 Mareno Philyaw, Troy State
6-2⅛ 206 4.49
4th round
NFL comparison: Vincent Brisby, Patriots
Developmental-type player with great size and speed. Adequate hands but needs to be more consistent. Shows quicks and excellent burst in and out of cuts but tends to oversell routes and wastes motion. Gets off line well; uses quickness and size to avoid press. Flashes big-play abilities, especially as runner after catch. Tremendous prospect with huge upside. Still raw. **Notable:** Shared quarterback position in 1997. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

16 Gari Scott, Michigan State
6-0⅛ 194 4.58
4th round
NFL comparison: Ricky Proehl, Rams
Has outstanding feel for passing game. Faster on field than 40 time would indicate and shows excellent acceleration. Outstanding body control, especially for size. Hands are solid but needs to become more physical. Knows which areas of zone to attack. Routes are technically sound, but needs to show burst in and out of cuts. Has tools to become solid intermediate receiver but plays more like vertical guy. Should succeed because of size and feel for passing game, but scouts worry about lack of physical ability. **Notable:** Twice prep all-state (Florida) in basketball. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

17 Jerry Porter, West Virginia
6-2¼ 215 4.48
3rd or 4th round
NFL comparison: Torrance Small, Eagles
Inexperienced prospect with tremendous

SPOTLIGHT
PLAXICO BURRESS

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

When a draft prospect is compared to Randy Moss, that's generally good and bad. Such is the case with Plaxico Burress.

On the plus side, here's a kid with freaky size (6-6, 230) and speed (4.6 40-yard dash) who can leap—a la Moss, who became a steal as the 21st pick of the 1998 draft. "To use a Gulf War term," says former Steelers college scouting coordinator Max McCartney, "he catches passes like the 'smart bomb' hits its targets. He can get to a lot of tough balls with his long arms and speed."

"With his size, especially those long arms," says Ravens director of college scouting Phil Savage, "he has a real advantage around the goal line. And he has so much natural ability."

But, also like Moss, Burress brings some character concerns to the table. He earned a reputation of being of a head case in his short stay at Michigan State. At least three scouts have mentioned they are weary of Burress' act, which included missed meetings and, on occasion, a "me-first" attitude. He sat out the 1997 season for academic reasons after a tough spell in military school, where he never adjusted to the regimented lifestyle.

"Whatever people have heard about Plaxico," Spartans offensive coordinator Morris Watts says, "they didn't come from (Michigan State). Some people are going to interpret a player's mannerisms or body language one way or another. But Plaxico never caused a problem here. He worked real hard to become a better player and did everything we asked of him."

After two NFL seasons, Moss has quieted concerns about his character. NFL scouts hope Burress does the same.

Burress became an instant playmaker in college, especially in big games. Against rival Michigan in '99, he caught 10 passes for 255 yards and even recovered an onside kick to preserve the game. In the Citrus Bowl against Florida, he caught a school-record 13 passes, three of them touchdowns, in the Spartans' 37-34 victory.

"A lot of players with his ability will take plays off," Watts says. "But he was out there against Florida in his last college game, running around hitting people on special teams, risking injury. He attracts a lot of attention ... and for good reason." *—Eric Edholm*

size and potential. Outstanding body control and hands. Route-running needs work. Must learn to sell fakes and avoid rounding off routes. Lacks feel for passing game but shows big-play flair. Escapes press coverage easily and shows adequate quickness for size. Tough to defend after catch because of great size/speed combination. Big, athletic receiver with tremendous upside. Likely will be taken earlier than grade would indicate because of potential. **Notable:** Played receiver and safety at West Virginia.
OVERALL GRADE: 22.0

18 Damon Gourdine, San Diego St.
5-6⅝ 163 4.48
5th round
NFL comparison: Jacquez Green, Buccaneers

Fine speed, quickness and feel for passing game but doesn't always play as fast as speed would indicate. Small player who can be pushed off routes in tight coverage. Good hands but occasionally drops catchable balls. Can go up and get ball, will compete in traffic and has knack for finding open zone. Could fit nicely as No. 4 or 5 option and should be comfortable in slot. **Notable:** Father is "Little Anthony" of Motown group Little Anthony and the Imperials.
OVERALL GRADE: 21.0

19 Todd Pinkston, South. Miss
6-2⅜ 164 4.49
5th round
NFL comparison: Nate Jacquet, Dolphins

All the tools. Shows excellent, soft hands with ability to snatch. Good speed and quickness. Can stretch defenses; works underneath well. Runs sound routes, looks fluid and shows body control. Biggest concerns are weight and strength. Has frame to grow and has been extremely durable. Will struggle against physical, press coverage and have hard time staying healthy without added bulk. Scouts love his tools and skills but worry he won't hold up. **Notable:** Younger brother, Joey, is Southern Miss defensive back.
OVERALL GRADE: 20.0

20 James Williams, Marshall
5-11 178 4.42
5th round
NFL comparison: Dedric Ward, Jets

Productive college receiver with speed and quickness but needs to add bulk. Excellent feet and body control. Adequate hands. Needs to become more consistent. Route-running skills are solid but needs work in intermediate zone. Trouble getting off press coverage against bigger, physical corners. Has speed to get vertical and shows big-play flair. Projects as third-down slot receiver. Speed and quickness are good, but lack of size will prevent him from playing on outside. **Notable:** Member of Marshall's track team. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

21 Troy Walters, Stanford
5-5½ 170 4.50
5th round
NFL comparison: Troy Edwards, Steelers

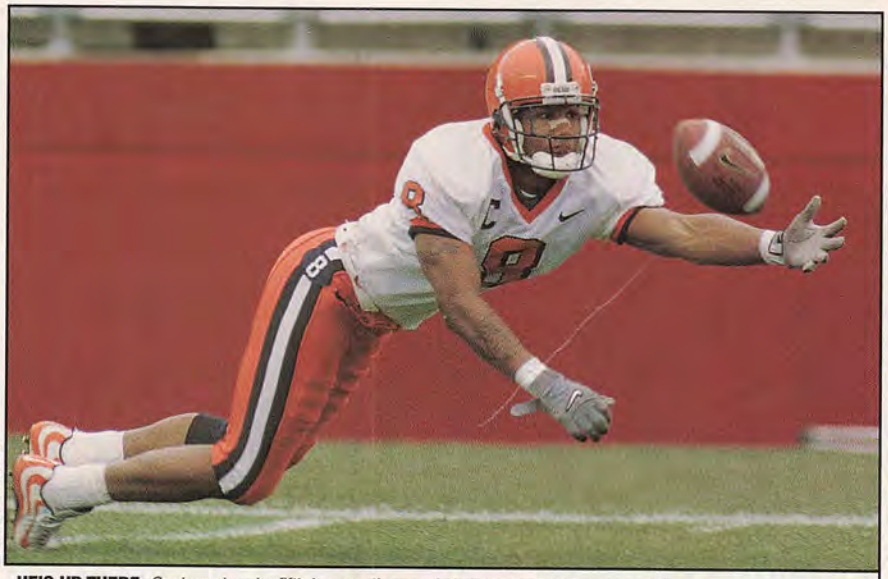
Smurf-like receiver who is quicker than he is fast. Excellent feel for passing game. Outstanding quickness and burst. Sells routes and shows ability to turn defenders around. Lacks great speed but shows acceleration and push. Physical for size. Hands and concentration are as good as anybody's in draft. Shows big-play flair but size and speed limit potential. Extremely productive receiver who has worked to overcome limitations. Should contribute as nickel, slot receiverand return specialist. **Notable:** Won Biletnikoff Award (nation's top receiver). **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

22 Wendell Montgomery, Wyo.
6-2¾ 209 4.52
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Matthew Hatchette, Vikings

Good deep burst for tall receiver and has shown ability to use body to shield defenders. Quickness is ordinary, hands are inconsistent. Lacks speed to excel but has size and strength to compete as possession guy. Runs crisp routes. Not afraid to go over middle. Willing blocker who could improve. Has size and strength but lacks speed and quickness. **Notable:** Ranks third on Wyoming's career list in receiving yards, behind Marcus Harris and Ryan Yarborough, who rank No. 2 and 3 in NCAA history.
OVERALL GRADE: 18.5

23 Cory Peterson, Mississippi
6-1¾ 198 4.65
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Joe Jurevicius, Giants

Good size, adequate speed and solid athletic ability. Lacks burst and acceleration to be premier wideout. Adept at keeping body between ball and smaller defenders; can make tough catches in traffic. Long strider who struggles against tight coverage but does decent job against zones. Sometimes disappeared in games and dropped catchable balls. Projects as No. 4 receiver with solid possession skills; adept at moving chains. **Notable:** Perhaps best clutch receiver in Ole Miss history. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**



JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

HE'S UP THERE: *Spotwood ranks fifth in receptions and sixth in yards in Syracuse history.*

24 Trevor Insley, Nevada
6-0¼ 183 4.73
6th round

NFL comparison: Ernie Mills, Cowboys

Sleeper who will move up draft boards if 40 time improves. Possession-type skills, although is quicker than that. Knows how to get open, is fearless going over middle and snatches ball cleanly. Quickness to avoid jam at line; can get separation. Slow 40 time. Impressive route-running skills. Projects as reserve possession receiver if speed and burst off line improve. **Notable:** First Division I-A receiver with 2,000-yard season (2,060 in 1999). **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

25 Chafie Fields, Penn State
6-1 197 4.65
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Chris Sanders, Titans

Underrated all-around receiver. Shows flash as big-play guy but lacks speed to pose threat. Extremely elusive. Does good job using size and quickness to get off line. Tough receiver who will make catch in traffic. Unlikely to stretch field but works well in seam and is threat after catch. Scouts love his body control and route-running ability. Tends to get overlooked because of slow 40 time but is faster than that. Chance to become solid third-down receiver in right system. **Notable:** Full name is Chafie Ali Fields; "Chafie Ali" means "child from God who brings great joy and fortune." **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

26 Trevor Gaylor, Miami (Ohio)
6-3⅛ 180 4.49
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Jeff Graham, Chargers

Has measurables but remains work in progress. Has speed to get downfield. Shows good body control and solid feet but tends to round off routes and lacks feel for coverage. Is coachable and has great work ethic. Could add bulk. Tends to get jammed at line and taken out of routes by physical corners. **Notable:** All-state prep high jumper (Missouri). **OVERALL GRADE: 17.5**

27 Chris Coleman, NC State
5-11⅞ 202 4.48
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Will Blackwell, Steelers

One of draft's most overrated receivers. Lacks hands or feel for passing game. Good size/speed combination. Route-running skills need refinement. Possession-type receiver with little flair for big play. Does good job getting off line against press coverage. Uses body and hands to establish position but doesn't know how to get open. Upside because of size and speed, but needs work on almost every facet of game. **Notable:** Appeared in play *In White America* on NC State campus.
OVERALL GRADE: 17.5

28 Quinton Spotwood, Syracuse
5-10¾ 189 4.60
6th round

NFL comparison: Jammi German, Falcons

Measurables are average. Shows flash as return specialist but consistency a concern. Does excellent job running routes and working intermediate zone. Shows body control, change of direction and fluid moves. Shows good ball skills but has mental lapses. Not threat in vertical passing game due to lack of speed. Quickness off line but lacks second gear. Needs lots of work. **Notable:** Returned four punts for touchdowns as sophomore.
OVERALL GRADE: 17.5

29 Shamari Buchanan, Alabama
6-0⅝ 215 4.65
6th round

NFL comparison: Charles Johnson, Eagles

Big, physical receiver with solid route-running skills and hands. Lacks breakaway speed to pose threat in vertical passing game. Good quickness. Average body control but does nice job using wide, powerful frame to get position. Will have trouble in NFL because defensive backs will be able to jump routes without fear of getting beat deep. **Notable:** Caught just 39 career passes at Alabama. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

30 Chris Cole, Texas A&M
6-0⅛ 191 4.50
7th round

NFL comparison: Corey Bradford, Packers

Has natural tools, including size and strength, but lacks polish. Fine athlete with playable speed who is most effective against zone coverage. Adept at finding seams. Struggles against tight coverage. Strong enough to break press but is too slow and route-running skills are marginal. Could be effective No. 4 or 5 receiver but don't expect many big plays. **Notable:** Ranks in Texas A&M top 10 in receiving yards (sixth) and receptions (10th).
OVERALL GRADE: 17.0

31 Windrell Hayes, Southern Cal
5-11⅛ 204 4.50
7th round

NFL comparison: Chris Walsh, Vikings

Good size and competitive speed. Has strength to release against press coverage. Solid and technically sound. Speed is marginal; lacks good burst. Displays body control and runs solid routes but needs to show explosion out of cuts. Catches well; runs hard after catch. Could be fourth or fifth receiver on third-down situations. **Notable:** Transferred to USC after two seasons at San Jose State. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

32 Marcus Knight, Michigan
6-1 180 4.50
7th round

NFL comparison: David Patten, Giants

Reliable with good hands and feel for passing game. Tough, physical player with size. Can contribute because he is polished route runner and uses body well to shield defenders. Will go over middle and make catch in traffic. Struggles against tight coverage and has tendency to disappear because he lacks speed to drive defenders off ball. Enough skills to develop as intermediate complementary receiver. **Notable:** Caught four TD passes and was offensive MVP in East-West Shrine Game.
OVERALL GRADE: 16.5

33 Marcus Stiggers, Colorado
5-6¾ 178 4.18
7th round

NFL comparison: Tim Dwight, Falcons

Track star with great explosion. Not polished but talents have drawn attention. Undersized and has trouble against physical corners. Runs crisp routes and shows excellent burst in and out of routes but does not have body to establish position. Soft hands. Projects as third-down slot receiver. **Notable:** Uncle, Jesse Johnson, played at Tulane; uncle, Glenn Johnson, played at Wyoming.
OVERALL GRADE: 15.0

Others: Matt Farmer, Air Force, 5-11, 194, 4.55; Muneer Moore, Richmond, 6-2, 198, 4.41; Larry Foster, Louisiana Tech, 5-11, 190, 4.60; Bashir Yamini, Iowa, 6-3¼, 181, 4.55; Leroy Hodge, Texas A&M, 6-0½, 207, 4.65; Charles Lee, Central Florida, 6-0¼, 194, 4.70; Brock McGrew, North Texas, 6-2½, 210, 4.51; Imani Percoats, Oregon State, 6-3, 206, 4.55.

Tight Ends

OVERRATED
Joe Dean Davenport, Arkansas
An imposing physical specimen but too awkward at this stage. Former prep basketball player needs plenty of polish.

UNDERRATED
Casey Crawford, Virginia
A polished receiver with the frame to add bulk. Needs to prove to scouts that he isn't injury-prone.

SLEEPER
Austin Wheatley, Iowa
Can you name the last good Iowa QB? Neither can we. College system did not allow this talented player to shine.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Erron Kinney, Florida
Has all the size and tools that scouts look for at the position. Athletic bruiser could make some NFL team real happy.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Ibn Green, Louisville
Lack of size limits his potential as a blocker. Chris Redman's favorite receiver is a long way from NFL-ready.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-6	245	4.80	NFL Minimum	6-2	240	5.00

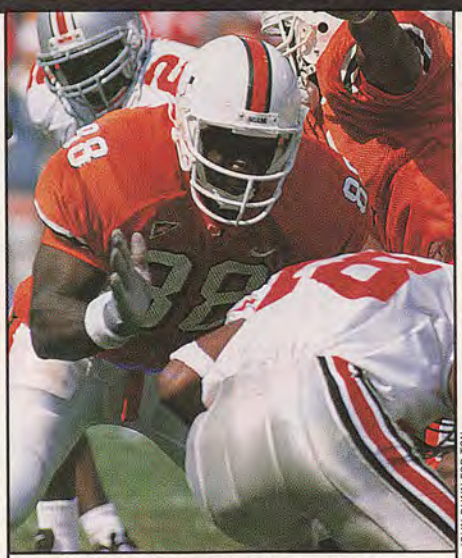
Everybody is looking for the complete tight end, and there aren't many out there. The ideal tight end is a good athlete who can stretch a defense and create mismatches. Much like at the fullback position, if the tight end is one-dimensional it forces the offense to be more predictable. Tony Gonzalez of Kansas City is an example of a guy who can go deep and force teams into mismatches and make defenses account for him. You also would hope this type of tight end is at least an adequate position blocker. The other type of tight end is a possession-type receiver like Frank Wycheck of Tennessee. Guys like him don't necessarily stretch a defense in the vertical passing game, but they know how to get open, they use their body to shield the defender from the ball, and they are adept at finding the open seams in the defense, especially on third down. This type of tight end can have a long and productive NFL career. Most teams carry three tight ends on the roster, and usually one of them is a blocking specialist who can help in short-yardage and goal-line situations. If you can get all these qualities in one guy, then you may have a future Pro Bowler.

Miami's Bubba Franks provides this group with a superstar at the position, but the lack of depth is a concern as tight ends become more integral to offenses. After Franks, Anthony Becht from West Virginia is the only player who projects in the top two rounds. Becht is more of a blue-collar player who has worked to become a receiving threat, but he still has a long way to come as an all-around player.

Arkansas' Joe Dean Davenport could go late in the second round because of his size and potential, but he is clumsy and will not contribute for at least another year.

Overall, this group is slim on talent, but offers a lot of developmental types who should become competent NFL players. The most interesting is Louisville's Ibn Green, who projects as an H-back in the right system because of his small size, but tremendous receiving skills.

*** Denotes underclassman.**



JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

TOTAL PACKAGE: *Franks is the only tight end worthy of being selected in the first round.*

1 Daniel "Bubba" Franks, Miami (Fla.) * 6-5 260 4.70 (40 time) 1st round

NFL comparison: Ben Coates, free agent

Hands: Natural and soft. Looks ball in well and catches it away from his body. Can catch in traffic. Good concentration. **Grade: 7.0**

Patterns: Has complete package. Excellent at short and long routes. Uses size to get position in short game. Is a physical receiver underneath and has a good feel vs. zone coverage. Stretches defenses with speed. Very fluid and smooth. Separates well from defenders. Speed will beat most linebackers and causes safeties trouble. **Grade: 6.5**

Blocking: Good effort blocker. Has size and physical tools. Not overly physical, but improving. Has excellent feet, which get him in good position. Needs work on angles. Shows good feet and speed as downfield blocker, but needs work on technique. **Grade: 6.0**

Release: Creates great separation with speed/strength combination. Has good quickness off line. Uses hands well to release and is excellent at slipping by linebackers. **Grade: 6.0**

Run after catch: Tough to bring down. Size and strength make him tough in open field. Has great speed for his size. Has good feel as a runner because of natural athleticism. **Grade: 6.5**

Notable: Third family member to play Division I football after uncles Jarrod (Baylor) and Kenneth (Texas Tech).

Final analysis: The top tight end prospect because of overall skills, size and athleticism. Great potential as a complete tight end. Would be a fit in any type of offense because of his receiving ability and blocking potential. **OVERALL GRADE: 32.0**

2 Anthony Becht, West Virginia 6-5¼ 262 4.76 2nd round

NFL comparison: Jay Riemersma, Bills

Hands: Shows flashes as a receiver with occasional great catches, but drops too many easy passes. Doesn't have natural hands. Work ethic is tremendous, and he has made great strides. **Grade: 4.5**

Patterns: Solid route runner with excellent feel for coverage. Finds open zones. Has good speed and quickness, but does not always run crisp routes. Has the tools to separate and stretch the field, but needs to be more technically sound. **Grade: 5.5**

Blocking: Needs to be more aggressive, but creates good surge when he uses his natural base. More effective when on the move. Takes good angles in pursuit and can wall off defenders. Needs to work on his feet and hands. Has some trouble sustaining blocks. **Grade: 6.0**

Release: Uses body well to get off the line. Comes off ball quickly and shows good hand strength, but comes out of his stance too high. Relies on size and strength to create separation. **Grade: 5.0**

Run after catch: Not a real threat. Lacks great speed, but tough to bring down in open field because of size and strength. Runs hard and uses size to stay up. Will drag defenders; lowers shoulders well to pick up extra yardage. **Grade: 5.0**

Notable: Caught 35 passes for 510 yards and five TDs as fifth-year senior.

Final analysis: Solid overall prospect with great work ethic and potential. Reliable player in both run and pass. **OVERALL GRADE: 26.0**

3 Joe Dean Davenport, Arkansas 6-6¾ 260 4.95 3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Kyle Brady, Jaguars

Interesting prospect because of size and solid hands. Makes tough catches and does good job of catching ball away from body. Marginal route runner who needs to work on feet and technique. Gets off line well because he is physical, but is not polished overall. Shows coordination problems; needs some time to grow into his body. Savvy route runner with good feel for coverage. Shields defenders well. Not an overpowering blocker, but has an excellent frame and

should improve greatly with coaching. Solid effort guy. Has quickness to make adjustments as downfield blocker. Has chance to be a solid backup right away and perhaps a starter down the line. **Notable:** All-state basketball player in high school. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

4 Erron Kinney, Florida
6-5 260 4.80
3rd or 4th round
NFL comparison: Eric Green, free agent

Big, athletic bruiser with a lot of potential. Solid athlete with good footwork and quickness. Has potential as an intermediate receiver; uses body well to establish position. Has quickness and speed to separate from linebackers. Not a good vertical receiver. Has solid hands and rarely drops a pass, but tends to let ball get into his body. Has size to be a dominant blocker, but needs to work on getting better position and using his body to wall off. With experience, could develop into a consistent run blocker. **Notable:** Was sports editor of high school newspaper. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

5 Casey Crawford, Virginia
6-5¾ 254 4.78
4th round
NFL comparison: David Sloan, Lions

Good-sized player with solid overall ability. Is athletic with good frame and solid hands. Lacks experience, but has shown flashes. Uses body well to establish position. Has speed and quickness to become a deep threat. Concentrates well as a receiver. Releases from the line well with great footwork and hand use, but needs to come out of stance lower. Solid blocker, but needs time to improve. A bit undersized as a run blocker, but takes solid angles and shows good technique. Needs to play with better base. Generates little surge because he gets back on his heels. Has size and strength but is more a wall-off blocker. Shows great effort but needs to improve lower body strength to sustain and drive better. Has had many injury setbacks; durability is a concern. An intriguing prospect—if healthy. **Notable:** Drafted by Atlanta Braves in 1995 major league baseball draft. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

6 Austin Wheatley, Iowa
6-3⅝ 242 4.59
4th round
NFL comparison: Marco Battaglia, Bengals

Raw prospect with great physical skills. Size is average, but speed draws attention. Has potential to be a vertical threat, but has little experience as a receiver. Hands are a concern. Lets the ball get into his body and does not concentrate enough as a receiver. Footwork also needs improvement. Takes a lot of false steps out of his stance and is not a polished route runner. Only an average blocker; effort needs a boost. Lacks great size, but strength and physical skills give him a chance. Needs to develop better technique to be a wall-off blocker. Shows potential as blocker with speed to get downfield and chip linebackers. Must play with a better base. **Notable:** Also handled some punting duties as a sophomore. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

7 Ibn Green, Louisville
6-1 223 4.65
5th round
NFL comparison: Tyrone Davis, Packers

More of an H-back/receiver type. Has excellent receiving skills and could cause matchup problems. Shows great feel in passing game; can turn quickly after the catch and run. Excellent hands and concentration. Will get downfield and make plays. Has quickness to escape press coverage and excellent size when matched against a safety. Is not big enough to make a difference as an in-line blocker and does not sustain blocks well downfield. Must develop as downfield blocker to stick. **Notable:** NCAA's all-time leading receiving tight end. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

PAUL NISELY / TSN

NEEDS WORK: *Wheatley has NFL potential, but at this point he's a better athlete than tight end.*

8 Zeron Flemister, Iowa
6-4 240 4.68
5th round
NFL comparison: Marcus Pollard, Colts

Interesting prospect because of natural skills but must overcome size limitations. High-effort player with good hands and runs good routes. Has athletic ability to create mismatches but lacks experience as a receiver. A project with great fluidity. Uses body well to create separation and can catch ball in a crowd. Tough receiver with frame to contribute in intermediate passing game. Does not overpower defenders and needs to work on leverage as a blocker. Sustains blocks well with a strong lower body, but lacks aggressiveness. Takes solid angles in the running game. Gets in good position with his feet, but needs to lock on better. Raw, one-dimensional player, but could emerge in right system. **Notable:** Never reached full potential due to injuries and off-field trouble. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

9 Dave Stachelski, Boise State
6-3⅛ 251 4.83
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Hunter Goodwin, Dolphins

Nothing impressive about size or speed, but solid all around. Shows good technique and great understanding of position. Physical blocker with solid base and excellent leg drive. Succeeds as in-line blocker because of quality angles. Has a lot of tools in passing game. Shows good hands and enough speed to stretch defenses. Gets held up at line vs. bigger, more physical defenders. Shows good quickness and knows how to use his hands to create separation. Stock continues to rise because of overall skills and work ethic. **Notable:** Caught 33 passes for 465 yards as senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.5**

10 Terrence McCaskey, Mississippi St.
6-5⅛ 279 5.06
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Ernie Conwell, Rams

A prospect because of size and potential. Has average hands and little game experience. Extremely raw as a route runner and does not have much feel in passing game. Gets off line with great size and strength, but needs more quickness. Does not have speed or burst to stretch defenses. Shows good blocking characteristics. Powerful base, good hand punch and solid leg drive, but needs to be more consistent. Might develop into solid in-line blocker and underneath receiver. **Notable:** Caught only three passes as senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.5**

11 Carlos Nuno, Brigham Young
6-4½ 242 4.74
6th round
NFL comparison: Blake Spence, Jets

More of a receiver than a blocker at this point. Has room to grow into frame, but will never bulk up enough to be strong run blocker. Speed and quickness are outstanding. Quick, soft hands. Has good feel for passing game and enough size to create matchup problems. Release off the line is outstanding because of technique, but could have trouble when jammed by bigger, more physical linebackers. A late-round stretch. **Notable:** Featured as linebacker in junior college. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.0**

12 Jay Tant, Northwestern
6-2⅝ 252 4.70
7th round
NFL comparison: Lonnie Johnson, Chiefs

Solid, but not overly impressive. Undersized, but built well and has great speed. Receiving threat because of ability to stretch the field. Has good athleticism and even better hands. Has some feel for coverage and can find open zones underneath, but needs to run routes more consistently. Excellent body control. Not enough bulk as a blocker, but shows good effort with leg drive and hand use. Solid late-round choice who could contribute soon on passing downs. **Notable:** State high school swimming champ in 50- and 100-meter freestyle. **OVERALL GRADE: 14.0**

Others: Joe Kavanaugh, Villanova, 6-6½, 237, 4.90; Ken Chandler, Air Force, 6-3, 265, 4.80; John Jones, Indiana (Pa.), 6-4⅜, 240, 4.61; Kyle Allamon, Texas Tech, 6-2⅞, 256, 4.94.

Offensive Tackles

OVERRATED
Chris McIntosh, Wisconsin
College system hid a lot of weaknesses because it allowed him to get by as a short-area player. Lacks great initial pop.

UNDERRATED
Adrian Klemm, Hawaii
Pure strength and explosion are impressive. One of the most naturally gifted tackles in recent draft history.

SLEEPER
Allen Mogridge, North Carolina
With some added bulk this athletic prospect could emerge. Has quick feet for a large man.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Todd Wade, Mississippi
Scouts love his size and aggressive approach. Don't be surprised if he sneaks into lower part of first round.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Chad Clifton, Tennessee
Too many concerns as a run blocker. Also has marginal leg drive and trouble adjusting on the move.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-5	305	5.10	NFL Minimum	6-3½	280	5.30

There are subtle differences between left and right tackles and the way scouts evaluate them. The left tackle, typically, is the best athlete on the offensive line. He usually lines up on the weak side (getting no help from the tight end) and is blocking the defense's best pass rusher, usually a smaller and quicker right end. And since the left tackle usually is protecting his quarterback's blind side, he must have good range and feet. Though most left tackles are finesse, position type players rather than explosive power players, they should also be at least adequate run blockers. Right tackles, on the other hand, usually are a little more physical because they're more involved in the run game. Most teams are righthanded and tend to run behind the right tackle. He doesn't have to be quite as gifted as a pass protector, because in many cases he has the tight end helping him. One misevaluation with right tackles is that people assume they must be big, physical guys who don't necessarily need great feet and quickness. But if the tight end goes in motion or switches to the other side, the right tackle is left on an island protecting the outside. Right tackles still need to have strength and size because the left ends they go against are typically more physical than right ends. Another factor in evaluating right tackles is the influx of better pass-rushing left ends like the Rams' Kevin Carter, who led the NFL in sacks last year.

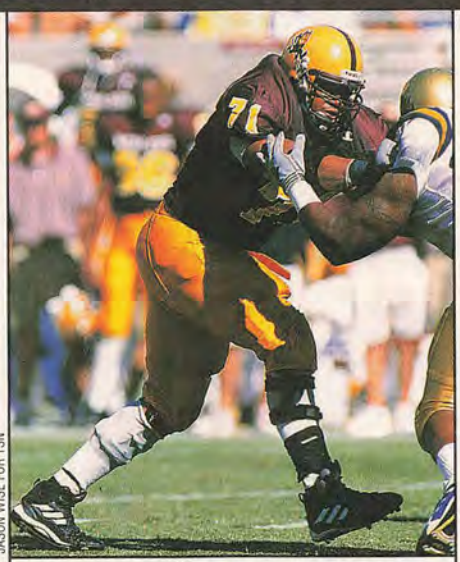
This group is top-heavy. There are six first- or second-round prospects, but the level of talent drops off significantly after that. Chris Samuels and Chris McIntosh are the big-name guys, but perhaps the biggest emergence has been that of Stockar McDougle, who proved at the Senior Bowl that he is ready to play in the NFL.

Typically, five or six tackles are taken in the first round. Even if they don't merit selection that high, teams usually reach late in the first round to fill holes. Marvel Smith, Darnell Alford and Adrian Klemm all are second-round prospects who have the physical skills to contribute right away, but technique and respective limitations could delay their contributions as first-year players.

***Denotes underclassman.**

1 Chris Samuels, Alabama
6-5⅜ 288 4.95 (40 time)
1st round

NFL comparison: Bruce Armstrong, free agent
Run blocking: Excellent body control for size. Works to finish, gets good leg drive and has deceptive strength. Shows strong initial pop and keeps good balance. **Grade: 6.5**
Pass blocking: Outstanding mirror and slide. Extremely athletic. Does great job shuffling feet and keeping with defender. Can anchor vs. bull rush. **Grade: 7.5**
Initial quicks: Explodes out of stance and rarely gets beaten off ball. Excellent feet and quick hands. **Grade: 7.5**
Strength: Is competitively strong and has lot of pop in arms. A bit lean for position; will need to add some bulk. **Grade: 5.5**
Mobility: Tremendous athlete for size. Gets off line quickly. Does great job on move. Can adjust in space and hit moving target with relative ease. **Grade: 7.0**
Notable: Allowed no sacks or quarterback pressures in '99.
Final analysis: Projects as dominant left tackle because of tremendous agility and feet for size. Could stand to add bulk to hold up better vs. bull rush, but is natural enough at position that he could get by at current weight. **OVERALL GRADE: 34.0**



JASON WISE FOR TSN

NATURALLY STRONG, BUT ... : *If Smith is to become a marvelous pro, he'll need to bulk up.*

2 Stockar McDougle, Oklahoma
6-5 340 5.50
1st round

NFL comparison: Jonathan Ogden, Ravens
Run blocking: Great push and explosion in run game. Could use work on feet. Has ox-like strength; does excellent job sustaining block when he locks on. **Grade: 7.5**
Pass blocking: Has some trouble vs. quick, inside rush. Outstanding base; can anchor against just about anybody. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: More of a mauler/right tackle at this point, but feet keep improving. Adequate quickness off ball, but will struggle some vs. fast first move. **Grade: 5.0**
Strength: Great, both upper and lower. Plays with great leverage and can move pile with strong leg explosion. Solid hands and upper body. Excellent initial pop. **Grade: 7.0**
Mobility: Nice for size. Struggles some to get downfield, but does adequate job adjusting on move. Good lateral movement, but has trouble getting back inside at times. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Was penalized only seven times in 750 plays last season.
Final analysis: Could be most impressive tackle overall. Combines excellent size, strength and mobility to dominate. Climbed draft boards after breakout week at Senior Bowl. **OVERALL GRADE: 31.0**

3 Chris McIntosh, Wisconsin
6-6⅝ 311 5.39
1st round

NFL comparison: Richmond Webb, Dolphins
Run blocking: Good movement and solid angles, but not great pop. Needs to be more explosive out of stance. Always in position. **Grade: 6.0**
Pass blocking: Good feet and leverage. Gets in good position. Can mirror and slide, and adjusts well on move. Intelligent blocker. Knows angles and understands how to adjust to certain pass-rush moves. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Shows better quickness on passing plays. Does not explode out of stance well. Can be beaten by quicker, more agile linemen. **Grade: 5.5**
Strength: Extremely powerful lower body; upper body could use work. Can anchor in vs. bull rush. Moves pile on running plays. Doesn't show great initial pop. **Grade: 6.0**
Mobility: Decent mobility, but slow feet. Gets in position with smarts. Gets out on linebacker adequately, but has some trouble adjusting. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: First player in Wisconsin history to start 50 games.
Final analysis: May be a bit overrated. Dominating player in college who got away with hiding several weaknesses. Needs to add explosion to upper body and become more agile. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

4 Darnell Alford, Boston College
6-4⅜ 352 5.35
2nd round

NFL comparison: Willie Roaf, Saints

Run blocking: Mauler instincts. Huge widebody with excellent lower-body strength. Has natural feet and athleticism to get great position, but sometimes gets sloppy. **Grade: 6.0**
Pass blocking: Has some trouble vs. outside speed rush, but ton of potential in pass protection. Naturally quick feet, great coordination. Solid base and can anchor vs. just about anybody. **Grade: 5.0**
Initial quicks: Sluggish at times, explosive at other times. Rarely gets beaten off ball. Natural feet and movement. Needs to give consistent effort. **Grade: 6.0**
Strength: Excellent upper- and lower-body strength. Workout warrior. When he locks on, is tough to beat. Great base and leg drive. If in position, will finish block. **Grade: 6.5**
Mobility: Light on feet. Impressive when asked to pull or trap. Adjusts well on move and can hit moving target. Good body control. Can make downfield block. **Grade: 5.0**
Notable: Got perfect score on Wonderlic test.
Final analysis: Has rare athleticism and smarts for position, but has shown only flashes of potential. Tends to look sloppy, so scouts project him as right tackle or even guard. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

5 Adrian Klemm, Hawaii
6-3⅞ 292 4.98
2nd round

NFL comparison: Wayne Gandy, Steelers
Run blocking: Successful because of positioning and angles he takes. Drives through blocks with good natural strength. Solid initial pop. Excellent at sustaining block. **Grade: 6.0**
Pass blocking: Outstanding feet. Gets into position and rarely gets beat outside. Good hand skills. Adequate at anchoring. With added bulk and strength, could develop into dominating pass blocker. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Excellent first step. Rarely gets beaten to point of attack. Comes off ball low and hard in running game. Has quick short set in pass protection. **Grade: 5.5**
Strength: Strong for size, but needs to add weight so he can handle bull rush. **Grade: 4.5**
Mobility: Does excellent job getting outside on pass plays and shows ability to fight back inside. Quick feet and natural lateral slide. Extremely athletic for size. **Grade: 6.5**
Notable: Speaks three foreign languages fluently.
Final analysis: One of most athletic and naturally gifted tackles to enter draft in recent history. With added bulk, could dominate. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

6 Marvel Smith, Arizona State *
6-5 310 5.20
2nd round

NFL comparison: Tarik Glenn, Colts
Run blocking: Good initial pop, but needs to sustain blocks better. Uses hands well to get under defenders' pads. Gets excellent position. With improved leg drive, will be dominating run blocker. **Grade: 6.0**
Pass blocking: Gets in outstanding position and adjusts well on move. Good base. Has anchored successfully against stronger foes. Gives up too much against outside speed rush, but has athleticism and quick feet to get there. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Great first step out of stance. Rarely gets beat to spot. Explodes into linemen. Stays low in run game and gets quick squat in pass protection. **Grade: 6.0**
Strength: Naturally strong, but needs to add bulk. Explosive strength, especially in upper body. Doesn't always use it. **Grade: 4.5**
Mobility: Good feet and quick first step. Good position on running plays and excellent agility in pass protection. Solid adjusting on move. Natural athlete at left tackle. **Grade: 6.0**
Notable: Likes to write poetry.
Final analysis: Has potential to become top pass protector. With more bulk, projects as dominant, all-around lineman. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

7 Todd Wade, Mississippi
6-7¾ 319 5.12
2nd or 3rd round

NFL comparison: Jon Runyan, Eagles
Intriguing because of height and natural speed. Decent feet, and shows potential in that area. Needs more time to develop into body. Adequately strong. Can anchor in pass protection and generate push in run game. Needs to be more explosive off ball. Lacks pop and tends to lose first step in one-on-one battles. Uses great frame in pass protection to redirect. Shows ability to slide laterally, but tends to be bit of a waist-bender. With more bulk and strength, could start right away at either tackle position. **Notable:** Father and grandfather also played at Ole Miss. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.0**

8 Chad Clifton, Tennessee
6-5 315 5.30
3rd round

NFL comparison: Todd Steussie, Vikings
Solid left tackle prospect. Outstanding leverage and base. Bit of a widebody, but moves feet well and gets in good position. Uses angles to his advantage. Solid hands; efficient in pass protection. Has bit of trouble adjusting on move, but takes all the right steps. Needs to do better job finishing in run game. Marginal leg drive; may lose block if he doesn't get great first pop. **Notable:** Started four years for Vols. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.0**

9 Bobby Williams, Arkansas
6-3¾ 322 5.27
3rd round

NFL comparison: Chris Ruhman, Browns
Developmental player with many natural skills. Excellent quickness and pop out of stance. Has nasty streak and explodes off ball. Tends to overextend at times and needs to work on leverage. Moves well and has quick feet, but body control is concern. Good strength when locked on. Will get out and reach on corner vs. speed rush. Can anchor against bull rush, but needs to get in better position consistently. Also must learn to take better angles on both run and pass plays. **Notable:** Was only returning starter on line that allowed SEC-low 14 sacks in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.0**

10 Jonathan Gray, Texas Tech *
6-5 320 5.40
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Greg Skrepenak, Raiders
Impressive agility for size. Natural widebody with quick feet and fluid motion. Solid adjusting on move. Shows signs of mirror and slide in pass protection, but needs to refine technique. Good position in run game. Has strong leg drive and can move pile. Has potential in all aspects of game, but needs to become more mentally tough and technically sound. **Notable:** Nephew of Titans assistant coach Jerry Gray. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

11 Greg Robinson-Randall, Michigan St.
6-5¾ 315 5.46
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Bob Whitfield, Falcons
Big man with long arms and decent strength. Tends to be waist-bender and play too erect, limiting potential explosiveness. Needs to work on technique and improve as run blocker. Is difficult for defender to get around because of size. Mauler-type, but shows some natural feet. **Notable:** Was nation's No. 1 junior college lineman before transferring to Michigan State. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

12 Wes Shivers, Mississippi State
6-5⅛ 321 5.40
4th round

NFL comparison: Kevin Gogan, free agent
College guard; projects as tackle because of build. Better run blocker than pass blocker. Solid short-area player. Most effective when locked on. Can handle bull rush and is decent wall-off blocker. Some trouble with feet. Struggles with lateral movement; at times, gets eaten up by speed edge rushers. **Notable:** Helped lead Hinds Community College (Miss.) to 21-2 record in his two seasons there. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

13 Mark Baniewicz, Syracuse
6-5⅞ 303 5.38
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Luke Petitgout, Giants
Developmental player with great natural pass-protection skills. Has perfect height and speed for left tackle. Needs to add bulk to handle bull rush. Quick feet, fluid in movement. Can mirror and slide in pass protection, but needs to show more hand explosion. Lets defenders get to body too often and can be manhandled. Takes many good angles in run game and is solid down blocker, but lacks leverage and strength to move pile. **Notable:** Graduate student; had 4.0 GPA as undergraduate. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.0**

14 Michael Thompson, Tennessee St.
6-4½ 287 5.12
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Aaron Graham, free agent
Intriguing developmental-type player. Excellent potential in frame, but needs to add bulk. Good technique and footwork. Has good burst off ball and initial pop. Struggles to sustain blocks and shows insufficient lower-body strength to move pile. Can move with any defender, but has trouble locking on and tends to get pushed around. **Notable:** Walk-on member of basketball team one season. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

SPOTLIGHT
CHRIS SAMUELS

ED NESSEN/ TSN

When Crimson Tide legend and Hall of Fame guard John Hannah ran out the ceremonial game ball before Alabama's game with LSU last fall, the debates began. Hannah, who played 13 years in the NFL and is considered the best offensive lineman in Tide history, may have been there to pass the torch to Chris Samuels.

Samuels, Bama's best lineman in years, has drawn comparisons to Hannah. "By far, he's the best one I've ever been around," offensive line coach Neil Callaway says. Samuels won't go that far. "Hannah's a legend around here," he says. "It's great just to mentioned in the same class as him."

Samuels, who made 42 consecutive starts at left tackle (including the last seven his freshman year), recorded eight pancake blocks against Mississippi in '99, but he is much more than a brute; he is one of the more agile and athletic tackles available in the 2000 draft. "I think I can play both styles," Samuels says. "I like finesse blocking, but I don't mind bruising a little, too."

"Chris is a true left tackle, which is quite an asset," Ravens director of college scouting Phil Savage says. "He has improved each year and still has room to improve, but he's a fine prospect. He's very athletic and very quick."

Samuels almost entered the draft after his junior season. His decision to return solidified his status as a high first-round pick, though an injury to his knee forced him out of the last game of his college career. "I actually hurt the knee week five (against Ole Miss)," Samuels says. "I just played through the pain until it was too much. The doctors say I am doing well. I feel great. I'd say I am about 98 percent recovered."

Despite the injury, Samuels has been flying up draft boards, possibly going as high as the fourth overall pick to the Bengals. If his knee checks out, he most likely will be taken in the first 10 selections. "He's an excellent prospect who did not participate in the Senior Bowl because of the (knee) injury," says former Steelers college scouting coordinator Max McCartney. "His draft status will heavily depend on how he performs in his workouts." —*Eric Edholm*

15 Joey Chustz, Louisiana Tech
6-7 317 5.38
5th round
NFL comparison: Scott Sanderson, Titans
Developmental-type player with great measurables. Size wows scouts. Uses hands well, but tends to let defenders into body. Has trouble with rush; will overextend and get caught out of position. Good upper-body strength and explosion, but coordination not entirely there. Tends to be waist-bender and not play with great leverage. **Notable:** Member of line that allowed only 63 sacks over four seasons. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

16 John Blick, Penn State
6-6 314 5.35
5th round
NFL comparison: Erik Williams, Cowboys
Still raw despite lots of playing time at top program. Excellent size, long wingspan and adequate feet. Not real quick, but does decent job adjusting on move and mirroring in pass protection. Stays on feet, but needs to play with better leverage. Tends to struggle in space. Good initial pop. Needs to do better job locking on. Overextends to get in position. **Notable:** First true freshman offensive lineman to start for Joe Paterno. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

17 Jeff Pilon, Syracuse
6-5½ 290 5.30
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Max Lane, Patriots
Has developmental size and decent athleticism. Shows toughness in running game and uses hands to create separation. More of short-area player, with good leverage to handle bull rush. Physical run blocker with good strength, but needs to develop more leg drive to sustain blocks. Has trouble blocking quick ends with double moves. **Notable:** Ontario native; was picked by Winnipeg in third round of '99 CFL draft. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.5**

18 Chase Raynock, Montana
6-5 300 5.25
6th round
NFL comparison: Jeff Novak, free agent
Good size/speed combination, but still a bit raw and needs technical work. Scouts love wingspan and hands, but feet only adequate. Needs work on exploding out of stance. Though not real quick, does decent job mirroring opponents and staying on feet. Struggles some in space. Sustains blocks when he gets in position. **Notable:** Nicknamed "Hollywood," is interested in pro wrestling career. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

19 Joe Hattendorf, Buffalo
6-5¼ 298 5.42
6th round
NFL comparison: Lomas Brown, Giants
Good short-area ability and adequate leverage. Tends to overextend in pass protection. Has agility to get to corner in pass protection, but struggles to adjust on move. Could add bulk and strength. Gets overpowered too often and does not play with enough natural base to handle bull rush or create surge in run game. **Notable:** Chose Buffalo over West Virginia, Rutgers and Penn State. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

20 Allen Mogridge, North Carolina
6-3½ 274 5.15
6th round
NFL comparison: Jason Mathews, Titans
Raw athleticism, quick feet make him legitimate prospect. Tends to play high, which hinders base and explosion. Tends to bend at waist; struggles with bull rush. Needs to add bulk and strength. Gets in good position, but has trouble sustaining block. **Notable:** From same hometown, Sevierville, Tenn., as Dolly Parton. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

21 Jim Stull, Delaware
6-6⅛ 301 5.14
6th or 7th round
NFL comparison: Zefross Moss, Patriots
Solid run blocker. Good size and natural skills, but relies mainly on effort. Good burst off line. Sustains blocks in run game. Hands need work; feet just adequate. More a short-area player. Doesn't get in great position and will have trouble vs. speed rush. Biggest obstacle is pass protection; needs to develop better base and anchor. **Notable:** Former walk-on. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.5**

22 Damon Nivens, Southern
6-4⅞ 314 5.10
7th round
NFL comparison: Todd Weiner, Seahawks
Athletic, with excellent natural speed and good size. Fluid for size. Excellent change of direction and range as pass blocker. Not always a power player; lack of toughness and physical style shows in run blocking. **Notable:** First-team all-state in football and basketball at Baldwin County (Ala.) High. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

Others: Shane Cook, Colorado, 6-6⅛, 309, 5.21; Robert Skapura, Louisiana Tech, 6-5⅝, 291, 5.19; Tim Leach, Temple, 6-6½, 315, 5.50; Clint Bendele, Southwest Texas State, 6-6, 288, 5.30; Austin Smithwick, Duke, 6-4⅝, 267, 5.20; Scott Fergus, Oregon, 6-5¾, 300, 5.30; Mark Grivna, Louisville, 6-9⅛, 334, 5.52; Pita Elisara, Indiana, 6-3⅝, 287, 5.43.

Guards

OVERRATED
Leander Jordan, Indiana (Pa.)
Slow feet have been exposed during the draft process. Took advantage of weak competition in college.

UNDERRATED
Richard Mercier, Miami
Dominating college player seems to get it done every chance he gets. Has outstanding motor.

SLEEPER
Noel LaMontagne, Virginia
Mobility as a blocker is hard to overlook. Will need to get a lot stronger to contribute in the pros.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Mark Tauscher, Wisconsin
Came out of nowhere to claim starting job at Wisconsin last year. Has the size to dominate as a short-area player in NFL.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Manuia Savea, Arizona
Former offensive tackle may have a difficult time making the transition inside. Does have a nasty streak, though.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-4	300	5.15	NFL Minimum	6-2	280	5.40

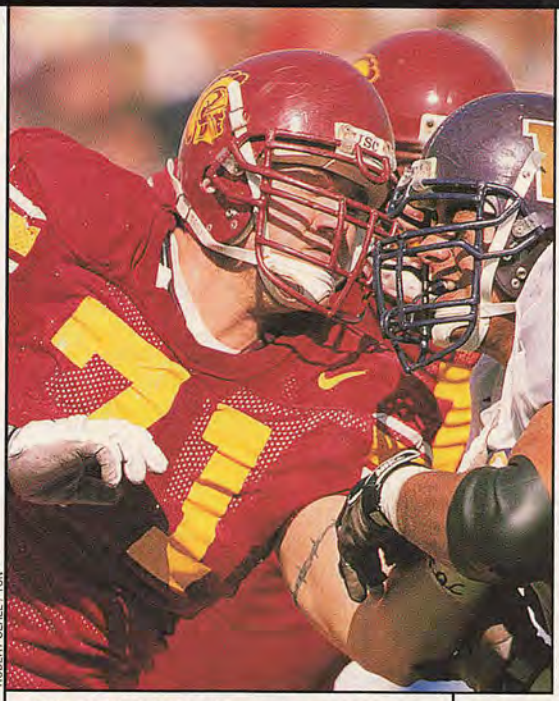
Years ago, many NFL teams wanted their guards to be able to trap, pull and angle block. Many used the West Coast offense featuring short passes and three-step drops, and because the quarterback gets the ball off in a hurry in that offense, big, physical pass-blocking guards weren't required. In recent years, however, most teams have gone to a 4-3 defense anchored by two massive tackles lined up over the guards. These DTs usually weigh 300 pounds or more, are explosive and quick and often good penetrators. As a result, the requirements for the guards blocking them have changed. To match up physically, teams now are looking for bigger, stronger players, perhaps sacrificing some pulling and trapping ability in the process. Today's guards must have enough quickness to cut off the defensive tackle and still be able to angle block and help out in pass protection. A big misconception about offensive linemen is that as long as a player is big, he can be a bad athlete and still play guard. There are a lot of big, stiff guys playing guard in the league today, but teams want big men with some athletic ability, too.

Though this group lacks a core of stars, there is depth. And the position could receive a huge boost because some of the top offensive tackle prospects project as guards. Cosey Coleman (Tennessee), a certain first-round pick, is one of the most complete prospects as a pure guard. Coleman is a mauler inside with excellent short-range quicks and is the type of player who will start immediately.

Seven players could be picked between the second and fourth rounds, which is almost unheard of for this position: Kaulana Noa (Hawaii), Travis Claridge (Southern California), Leander Jordan (Indiana, Pa.), Richard Mercier (Miami, Fla.) Damion McIntosh (Kansas State), Tutan Reyes (Mississippi) and Brad Bedell (Colorado).

However, guards typically are viewed as non-impact players who can be obtained in the mid-to-late rounds. This year's draft could be a bit of a chess game concerning the position. If one or two guards are taken unusually early, the rest of the league could get anxious and reach for one on the first day.

*** Denotes underclassman.**



ROBERT SEALE / TSN

TROJAN TRADITION: *Claridge is the latest in a long line of highly rated USC offensive linemen.*

1 Cosey Coleman, Tennessee *
6-5 315 5.30 (40 time)
1st round

NFL comparison: Larry Allen, Cowboys
Run blocking: Comes off ball hard with leverage. Strong initial pop with power to dominate run game. Outstanding lower-body strength. Uses leg drive to create surge and shows excellent body control. **Grade: 7.0**
Pass blocking: Outstanding base. Can sit and anchor but also shows ability to mirror and slide. Solid footwork. Uses hands well to keep separation. **Grade: 6.5**
Initial quicks: Fires out in run game. Shows solid feet; rarely gets beat off ball. Quick, short set in pass game. Few problems getting out of stance and into blocks. **Grade: 6.5**
Strength: Outstanding. Lower body as strong as anyone's at position. Terrific base in pass game. Rarely pushed around as run blocker. Explosive strength and able to sustain. **Grade: 7.0**
Mobility: Comes off line well and shows ability to adjust. Moves feet well and does outstanding job getting out on linebacker. **Grade: 6.5**
Notable: Helped lead Tennessee to 33-5 mark last three years.
Final analysis: May be best all-around lineman in draft because of strength/mobility combination. Projects as franchise-type player.
OVERALL GRADE: 33.5

2 Kaulana Noa, Hawaii
6-3⅞ 307 5.24
2nd round

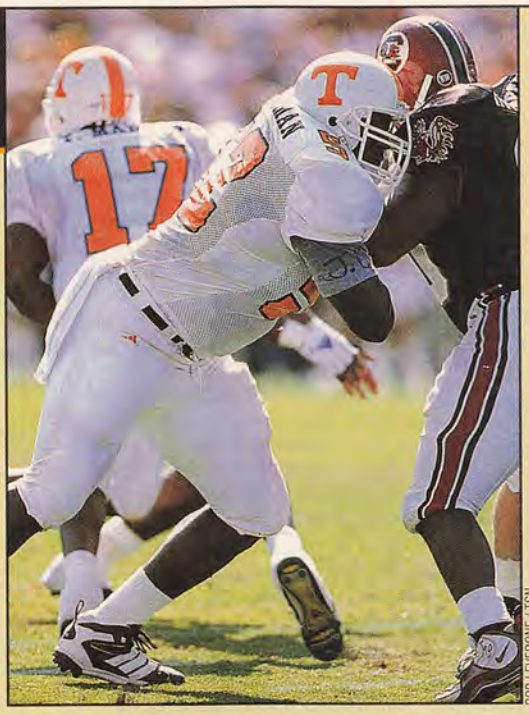
NFL comparison: Ruben Brown, free agent
Run blocking: Great strength, leverage and base. Can move pile. Doesn't always get great position, but if he locks on it's over. Works to finish and does great job sustaining blocks. **Grade: 6.5**
Pass blocking: Shows quick, short set and does good job sinking hips and anchoring vs. bull rush. Has trouble against quick pass rushers but usually gets good position and beats defender off ball. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Decent quickness but needs to improve. Gets too erect out of stance but compensates with great lower-body strength. **Grade: 5.5**
Strength: Excellent bulk and explosion. Solid upper body. Uses lethal hands to create separation in pass protection. **Grade: 7.0**
Mobility: Lacks speed but shows lateral movement and ability to pull and trap. Does nice job adjusting on move and hits targets with ease. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Part of Hawaii team that went from 0-12 in 1998 to 9-4.
Final analysis: Underrated. Scouts like him because of strength/lateral movement combination. **OVERALL GRADE: 30.5**

3 Travis Claridge, Southern California
6-5 312 5.30
2nd round

NFL comparison: Kevin Gogan, free agent
Run blocking: Outstanding base; sinks hips into blocks. Works to finish and does outstanding job driving legs through blocks. Feet are adequate. Occasionally out of position, but if he gets there he finishes. **Grade: 6.5**
Pass blocking: Setup is average but usually gets good position and does excellent job controlling defender with strong hands. Great pop in short set. Can anchor in phone booth in one-on-one situations. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Adequate but needs to do better job coming out of stance low. Dominant

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

SPOTLIGHT
COSEY COLEMAN


BOB LEVERONE / TSN

Don't be surprised if Cosey Coleman makes a quick adjustment from college to the pros. He has a long resume of making adjustments on and off the football field.

Coleman never played high school football at the junior varsity level. He was so big, his coaches feared for the opponents' lives. Instead, he went directly to varsity. Coleman then had to switch high schools after his junior year. As a senior, he had a 3.49 GPA—a great number for any student. But Coleman wasn't just any student.

In addition to schoolwork and football, he had an after-school job as a restaurant manager. That meant getting up at sunrise to catch the bus, a full day of school, football practice and, on the nights he closed the restaurant, working until 11 p.m.

When Coleman went to Tennessee in the summer before his freshman year, he was told to drop some weight off his 330-pound frame. Coleman responded, believing he might have a chance to start at defensive tackle.

He didn't. That's because the coaching staff believed he had enough talent to play on the offensive line. Coleman didn't disappoint and as a true freshman played in all 13 of the Volunteers' games, started the last six games at tackle and was named to the Freshman All-SEC team.

Coleman was just starting to get comfortable playing offensive tackle when Tennessee brought in a new offensive line coach, Mike Barry, who wanted his linemen to be interchangeable. Barry decided Coleman would be even better at guard. Coleman was a little leery about making the switch, but it didn't show in his play. At the end of the season he was voted first-team All-SEC.

At 315 pounds, Coleman had the size to play guard. However, coaches and NFL scouts soon discovered he also had the mobility and quickness necessary to dominate the position. This past season, Coleman was the star on a line that allowed a sack only once every 13 pass attempts and helped pave the way for over 2,000 rushing yards.

Barry believes Coleman's athleticism and versatility will be a big plus in the NFL. "He knows how to play tackle, he knows how to play guard, and I think the next thing he should work on is learning to play center because it is something he could eventually do," says Barry. "The more you can do, the more positions you can play, the more valuable you become."

Coleman's next adjustment will come on an NFL field. History shows he can make it. —*Jared Hoffman*

when sinks into base, but occasionally gets beat off ball by quicker, more explosive defensive tackles. **Grade: 5.0**
Strength: Shows more on field than in weight room. Excellent trunk allows him to anchor. Uses outstanding hands to create separation in pass protection. Good surge in run game; will drive through blocks with superb lower-body strength. **Grade: 6.5**
Mobility: Not overly quick but shows body control and ability to adjust. For now, more of short-area player. **Grade: 5.0**
Notable: As a youngster worked out with former Trojan Marv Marinovich, father of former Southern California QB Todd.
Final analysis: Reliable and physical throwback-type. Mobility needs to improve but should start immediately based on strength and toughness. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

4 Damion McIntosh, Kansas State
6-3⅝ 311 5.11
2nd or 3rd round
NFL comparison: Damon Denson, Ravens
Converted defensive tackle who played mostly offensive tackle in 1999. Inexperienced but shows tremendous strength and base as blocker. Better run blocker than pass blocker but shows enough feet in passing game to improve. Excellent mobility and capable of getting out and chipping linebackers. Works to finish blocks and displays good lower-body strength when sustaining blocks. Needs to work on technique in pass protection. Tends to overextend and get out of position Should develop with experience. **Notable:** Played offensive line just one season. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.0**

5 Richard Mercier, Miami (Fla.)
6-2 290 5.30
2nd or 3rd round
NFL comparison: Dave Szott, Chiefs
Average size and limited athletically but dominant and reliable. Plays stiff but has outstanding motor and gives great effort. Good base and ability to drive through blocks. In passing game, needs to work on hips but shows good hand strength and ability to redirect defenders. Strength isn't explosive but has mauler skills and does excellent job in short area. Mobility is adequate but is capable of adjusting and hitting moving targets. Reconstructive knee surgery in 1997 is concern but seems recovered and shows excellent lower-body strength. **Notable:** Talented skier who grew up in Montreal, Quebec. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.0**

6 Leander Jordan, Indiana (Pa.)
6-4 330 5.36
3rd round
NFL comparison: David Dixon, Vikings
Highly overrated. Scouts love size and strength in run game but question feet and mobility. Too slow out of stance and has trouble adjusting. Strength to outmuscle defenders if he locks on. Quick enough in pass protection but needs to learn better technique coming off ball. Outstanding body and strength but needs better body control. **Notable:** Low SAT scores kept Jordan from signing with bigger school. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.5**

7 Brad Bedell, Colorado
6-4⅜ 300 4.98
3rd round
NFL comparison: Aaron Taylor, retired
Lacks strength and quickness but has size and speed. Mobile blocker who does excellent job hitting moving targets while trapping and pulling. Not dominating as run blocker but technically sound and works to get position. Strong leg drive to finish blocks. Uses leverage to sustain but needs more upper-body strength, better initial pop and work on hands. Short-area mobility but doesn't set up well in pass game. Trouble mirroring while on island. Not great space player in pass protection. Feet are concern. **Notable:** Began career at a junior college. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.5**

8 Tutan Reyes, Mississippi
6-3⅜ 281 5.21
3rd round
NFL comparison: Randy Thomas, Jets
Ascending on most draft boards because of skills and upside. Quick feet and able to adjust on move. Excellent at getting out of stance; shows explosive hand use. Athleticism to get out on second level. Must become better pass blocker. Plays too stiff and drops head. Good base when anchored but could use bulk to handle bull rush. Athletic left guard-type who needs to

improve strength in lower body to create surge in run game and generate better anchor in pass protection. **Notable:** Began Ole Miss career at tight end. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.5**

9 Ryan Johanningmeier, Colorado
6-5¼ 309 5.04
3rd or 4th round
NFL comparison: Kevin Donnalley, Dolphins

Mauler with size and strength. Marginal athlete who needs work on feet. Adequate mirror and slide in pass protection. Has trouble with quick pass rushers. When locked on, tough to beat. Uses above-average lower-body strength well to drive through run blocks and anchor in pass game. Not overpowering but steady due to use of angles and hands to generate separation. Lots of upside because of speed, size and versatility. Can play any position on line but lacks enough skill to project as starter at one spot. **Notable:** Father, B.J., played three years in NFL. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

10 Noel LaMontagne, Virginia
6-4⅜ 304 5.09
4th round
NFL comparison: Steve Wisniewski, Raiders

Intriguing prospect because of height/weight/speed factor. Mobile blocker who does exceptional job on traps and pulls. Natural at hitting targets on move. Gets in position and knows angles in run game. Lower- and upper-body strength are biggest detriments. Gets to all blocks but has trouble sustaining. On occasion gets bull-rushed in pass protection and overpowered in run game. Good explosion out of stance but plays on heels and gets taken off feet too often. With improved strength, he could be sleeper. **Notable:** Father and brother played football at Dartmouth. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.0**

11 Manuia Savea, Arizona
6-2¼ 301 5.15
4th round
NFL comparison: Will Shields, Chiefs

Explosive blocker with strength and leverage. Mauler with outstanding body control who does good job maintaining base as drive blocker. Good speed and ability to get out to second level. Potential in feet but needs work on technique. Good athlete with thick upper body and strong lower body. Plays with nasty streak and has good work ethic. **Notable:** Switched from offensive tackle. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.0**

12 Jeno James, Auburn
6-3 298 5.56
4th round
NFL comparison: Joe Panos, Bills

Offensive tackle projects as guard due to lack of size. Fluid player but not athletic. Good quickness out of stance. Explodes into blocks and drives legs to finish. Struggles at times to get position. Slow feet; has trouble adjusting on move. Has strength to develop into punishing run-blocker if takes better angles. Adequate feet in pass protection and ability to mirror and slide but tends to overextend and lose control of body. Good strength but will get overpowered occasionally in pass protection when doesn't set feet and sink hips. **Notable:** Enjoys writing poetry. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.0**

13 Mark Tauscher, Wisconsin
6-3 313 5.30
4th or 5th round
NFL comparison: Frank Middleton, Buccaneers

Offensive tackle projects as right guard due to size and average quickness. Sluggish and soft in midsection but upper-body strength is outstanding. Great hand explosion and ability to redirect in pass game. Footwork is marginal; has trouble with quick defenders. Also struggles against bull rush. More of short-area player. Better run blocker. Gets by on upper-body strength and ability to push people around. Needs to do a better job driving legs and sustaining blocks in run game. If fails to make good initial contact, has trouble adjusting. **Notable:** Helped Ron Dayne become all-time leading rusher in Division I-A. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

14 Ben Gilbert, Ohio State
6-4 300 5.20
5th round
NFL comparison: Matt O'Dwyer, Bengals

Explosive player with good strength who needs to bulk up. Good initial pop but lacks explosion out of stance. Mobility a concern; does poor job adjusting on move. Footwork needs improvement. Steady wall-off-type blocker with good upper-body strength who needs to improve driving legs and playing with leverage. Better pass blocker who shows excellent feel and ability to pick up blitz. Uses hands to redirect and shows good short-area qualities. Needs work on feet and base to anchor against bull rush. Skills don't wow scouts but extremely productive and plays hard. **Notable:** Avid hunter and fisherman. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.0**

15 Steve Estes, Colgate
6-4¾ 289 4.89
5th round
NFL comparison: Erik Norgard, Jets

One of more athletic linemen in draft. Excellent size/speed ratio. Good technician who does nice job sustaining blocks when locked on. Gets good separation, uses hands well and has solid base. Outstanding feet, understands angles in run game. Not a power player; has trouble vs. bigger, physical inside defenders. Plays with enough leverage and technique to be solid run blocker. More of finesse player with great feet and athletic skill. Measurables and upside will draw lots of interest. **Notable:** Greg Manusky and Eugene Robinson were Colgate alums active in NFL in 1999. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

16 Roger Roesler, Texas
6-5½ 312 5.40
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Corbin Lacina, Vikings

Underachiever who has size and strength to make impact. Mauler-type with bulk and mass but lacks explosion and is too slow out of stance. Pushes people around in run game but needs to play with better base and drive legs more to sustain blocks. Lacks speed but shows ability to get out on second level and can adjust on move. As pass blocker, shows good short-area quicks and takes up space with impressive wingspan. Biggest problem is inability to anchor vs. bull rush. **Notable:** Frequently made athletic director's honor roll. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

17 Al Jackson, Louisiana State
6-2⅝ 319 5.20
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Zach Wiegert, Jaguars

Solid prospect with experience and understanding of position. Good size and speed. Quicker than most. Good size and impressive movement. Explosive hands. Gets good initial push from stance but needs to play with better leg drive. Lack of lower-body strength causes trouble as run blocker and in pass protection when anchoring vs. bull rush. Solid pass blocker with good sense for blitz and quick enough feet and hands to redirect. **Notable:** Also played tackle at LSU. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

18 Adam Davis, Oklahoma State
6-4¼ 312 5.40
6th round
NFL comparison: Roger Duffy, Steelers

Not as athletic as most scouts think but aggressive and has size to match up. Good bulk but lacks strength to hold up; soft body. Excellent leg drive in run game and works to finish but allows defenders to get into pads. Gets taken off feet too often. Does fine job in sets and adjustments in pass game. Needs to do better job sinking hips, and strength in base causes problems when anchored. Mobile enough to get out to second level and does good job adjusting on move but tends to get pushed around and plays too high. **Notable:** Came to Oklahoma State as tight end. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

19 Jason Thomas, Hampton
6-3⅛ 289 4.89
7th round
NFL comparison: David Diaz-Infante, free agent

Sound fundamentally. Uses body well to get position to make blocks. Good initial explosion and pop; usually isn't overpowered in run game and stays on feet. Pass blocking is biggest concern. Lacks great base to anchor and tends to lunge and reach, which puts him out of position and makes him susceptible to stunts. Enough mobility and athleticism to be interesting prospect but must improve strength. **Notable:** MEAC, Hampton's league, has produced Robert Porcher, Harry Carson, Deacon Jones and Art Shell. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

Others: Terrence Beadles, Arkansas-Pine Bluff, 6-3, 298, 5.07; Kareem Ellis, North Carolina, 6-4⅝, 317, 5.80; Semisi Heimuli, Texas A&M, 6-2¼, 308, 5.35; Matt Johnson, Brigham Young, 6-4½, 330, 5.25; Andrew Kline, San Diego State, 6-2⅝, 298, 5.48.

TSN Player Ratings

Centers

OVERRATED
Kurt Murphy, Ohio State
Tough guy with some skills and a good attitude, but will struggle against big defensive tackles in the NFL.

UNDERRATED
John Romero, California
A raw talent with tremendous size but an underachiever in college. However, there's enough there to work with.

SLEEPER
Seneca Gray, Kentucky State
Has enough athleticism to overcome size limitations. A good NFL coaching staff could unlock his potential.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Mike Malano, San Diego State
A high-effort player with a great work ethic and feel for the position. Scouts like him, and that counts for a lot.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Brad Meester, Northern Iowa
He has a feel for the position and works hard, but his size limitations may be too much to overcome.

What scouts are looking for

NFL Average	Hgt.	Wgt.	40	NFL Minimum	Hgt.	Wgt.	40
	6-3	290	5.10		6-1½	280	5.30

After left tackle, center may be the most important position on the offensive line. With most teams playing 4-3 defenses, today's centers often have no one lined up directly across from them at the line of scrimmage. Therefore, they must be able to reach the linebacker and block in space. Because of that, a center must have good feet and be proficient as an angle blocker. They also need the range to help out in pass protection; in some cases, they may even have to pick up an outside pass rusher. However, there is another factor that must be considered. As much as teams are looking for an athletic position-type center, if he does not have enough strength and bulk to anchor at the point of attack, then defenses will find him out and put a big tackle on his nose. This can create a mismatch and totally disrupt the run game. Though athletic ability and good feet are very important, size and strength cannot be ignored. Centers also need intelligence and football instincts. In many cases, they make all of the line calls and have to react quickly, in terms of anticipation and recognition.

Like last year, when only two centers were drafted, this position is not a hot commodity because so many better athletes at other line positions are available. John St. Clair of Virginia is the top prospect, but he likely will slide to mid-second round because he has little experience and a lot of holes in his game.

Few others figure to be drafted. Oklahoma's Matt O'Neal, Rob Riti of Missouri and Kurt Murphy of Ohio State warrant looks late. This year's group is deeper than usual, which means even a player such as Blane Saipaia from Colorado State could sneak into the last round, but most likely, several free agents this summer will get looks.

1 John St. Clair, Virginia
6-4¾ 293 5.20 (40 time)
2nd round

NFL comparison: Kevin Mawae, Jets
Run blocking: Has good range, quickness, leverage and base. Plays with head on a swivel. Can get out and chip the linebacker. Tends to overextend but has speed and quickness to play uncovered. **Grade: 6.0**
Pass blocking: Impressive feet to mirror and slide. Picks up blitz well. Anchors point of attack well. Uses excellent quickness to get in position and can help guards when uncovered. **Grade: 5.5**
Initial quicks: Not especially quick off ball but has excellent technique and uses his hands to get a feel off snap. Plays better when not working vs. a nose tackle because he can set up and read. **Grade: 5.5**
Strength: Comes off ball with good leverage and burst. Can anchor but needs work on leverage in pass blocking. Not an overpowering run blocker but has good initial strength and sticks with blocks. **Grade: 5.5**
Mobility: Gets downfield well. Quick feet and natural speed for the position. **Grade: 6.0**
Notable: Moved from tight end in spring 1997.
Final analysis: The top center in the draft. Might be a reach in the first round but has talent to start right away. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

2 Matt O'Neal, Oklahoma
6-3 280 5.20
3rd round

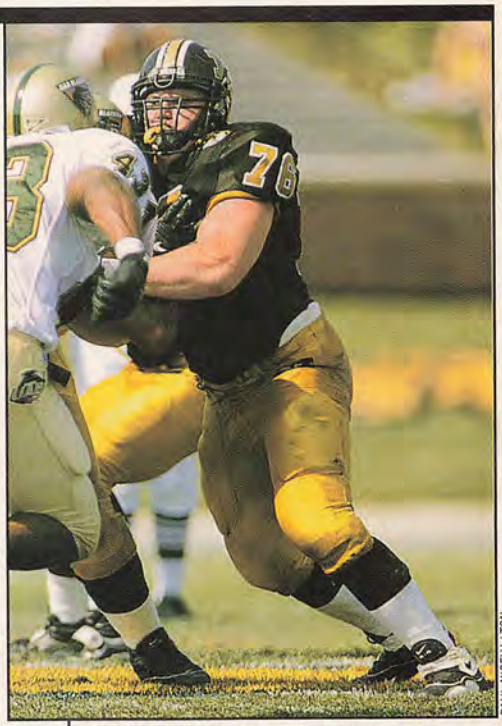
NFL comparison: Tom Nalen, Broncos
Tall and slender with excellent feel for position. Great effort guy who has worked to establish solid feet and quickness. Has some trouble getting out of stance and is much more effective when uncovered. Does an excellent job in space, recognizes blitz and uses hands well to redirect and feel out the area. Has trouble when lined up head-on. Lacks natural strength and usually falls behind on first step. Nice short-area pass skills with quick hands and solid overall movement. A blue collar-type player who has worked hard. Initial burst and overall strength are concerns. **Notable:** Team MVP as freshman at junior college at Palomar College. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

3 Rob Riti, Missouri
6-1⅞ 285 5.16
4th round

NFL comparison: Cory Raymer, free agent
Smaller center with excellent strength and good short-area quickness. Knows position and is outstanding as line's leader. Makes all the calls and reads defenses. Not explosive; more of a mauler who can lock on and drive in the run game. Good leverage and awareness. Picks up blitz well but has trouble sustaining and driving through blocks because of size. Extremely productive college player who might be too small. **Notable:** Set school record with 1,000-pound squat lift in 1999. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

4 Blane Saipaia, Colorado State
6-2⅜ 309 5.43
6th round

NFL comparison: Jerry Ostroski, Bills
Versatile player; also plays tackle. Excellent size and natural skills for center. Solid athlete with better than average feet. Gets into position and sustains blocks well. Hands are biggest asset. Great pop and explosion out of set and uses hands to establish separation. Probably second-best center but tore left ACL in December 1999. **Notable:** Also tore MCL in right knee in 1998. **OVERALL GRADE: NONE (24.0 BEFORE INJURY)**


PAUL WISELY / TSN

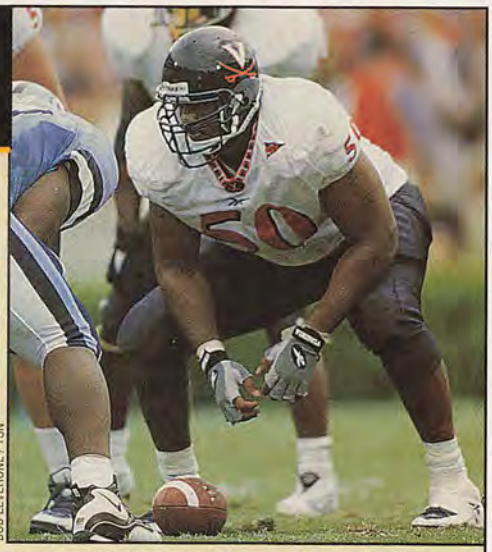
TOO SMALL? *Riti was very productive at Missouri, but his lack of size is a concern.*

5 Kurt Murphy, Ohio State
6-2 290 5.20
6th round

NFL comparison: Tim Grunhard, Chiefs
Tough, hard-nosed player. Not the biggest center but has a lot of natural strength. Decent short-area quickness, plays with good balance, stays on his feet and uses his hands well to create separation in pass protection.

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

SPOTLIGHT
JOHN ST. CLAIR


BOB LEVERONE / TSN

As a redshirt freshman tight end at Virginia in 1996, John St. Clair wanted to get his hands on the ball as much as possible. He got his wish, but only after coach George Welsh asked him to play center.

St. Clair did not catch a pass in nine games in '96, but Welsh noticed he executed some great blocks and developed the build needed at center.

"A guy that's a tight end is usually a pretty good athlete, and (John) could do more than one thing," says Cavaliers offensive line coach Paul Schudel. "He can pass protect, single-block, reach guys in the blocking scheme, he's quick and plays with good leverage. I always put as good an athlete as I can at the position. They're generally some of the best players on the team."

The switch paid off. As a senior, St. Clair won the Jacobs Blocking Award—which goes to the ACC's top blocker, as determined by a vote of conference defensive coordinators—and was named to several All-American teams. NFL scouts have taken notice; St. Clair is expected to be the first center taken in the draft.

Max McCartney, the former Steelers college scouting coordinator, was impressed by St. Clair's attitude at the Senior Bowl. "He was able to handle the exchange and all the responsibilities of line calls without detriment to his blocking," McCartney says.

St. Clair had success after switching positions because of his athleticism and his willingness to adapt to his team's needs. For example, during practice before Virginia's appearance in the Micron PC Bowl last December, St. Clair broke the thumb on his right (snapping) hand. Instead of bowing out, he practiced snapping with his left hand (though ultimately he was able to use his normal hand).

It's sometimes hard to determine the contributions of a center, and St. Clair doesn't help, only modestly admitting his role in the production of running back Thomas Jones, his former roommate, who set the ACC single-season rushing record with 1,798 yards in '99.

"If he gets half a block (from me), he can stay in the hole," St. Clair says. "He hit the hole so fast, I had to learn to get engaged with the (defensive lineman) quickly, which I did."

Virginia finished third in the ACC in rushing in '99, with 2106 yards (191.5 yards-per-game), and St. Clair obviously had a big hand—broken thumb and all—in that success. —*Liz House*

Instinctive player. Has adequate range and is decent in space but is a little stiff. Has solid natural skills and plays hard, but size is a concern when matched up on nose tackle. **Notable:** Started last 30 games in college. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

6 Brad Meester, Northern Iowa
6-3⅛ 283 5.20
6th round

NFL comparison: Frank Winters, Packers

Not a gifted athlete and lacks size but is tough and plays hard. Does not have great range or quickness. Good weight-room strength, but it doesn't transfer onto the field. Needs to play with more leverage and base. More of a short-area mauler with great hand strength and initial explosion. Will stick with block and has excellent leg drive but can't always matchup one-on-one. Does not look to hold up well but might get a look because of work ethic and feel for the position. **Notable:** Named to coaches' Division I-AA All-America team as senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

7 John Romero, California
6-4 329 5.40
6th round

NFL comparison: Kendyl Jacox, Chargers

Good raw size and skill but has not played to potential. Wide body but lacks strength. Plays too soft in middle, and footwork is poor. Relies on size in the middle and shows poor leverage as blocker. Tough to beat when he locks on but shows little mobility and struggles to make downfield blocks. Has potential because of size, but feet are too slow. **Notable:** Moved to defensive line and back to center in '96. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.5**

8 Doug Dorley, Bowling Green
6-3¼ 296 5.34
7th round

NFL comparison: Ryan Tucker, Rams

Decent athletic ability and feet; average range and balance. Gets out on linebacker and has mirror and slide skills in pass protection. Lacks strength and is not physical in run game. Has problems playing head up on defensive linemen. Needs to be in scheme in which he takes angles in blocks and plays in space. Has frame and quickness to make it but must add strength. **Notable:** Transferred after two years at Southern Illinois. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.5**

9 Mike Malano, San Diego State
6-2⅛ 295 5.41
7th round

NFL comparison: Mike Devlin, Cardinals

Decent size, and motor always is running; great at recognizing defenses. Has only adequate quickness and plays too straight up in pass protection, limiting productivity in space. Has short arms and takes choppy steps. Could stick if he adds strength and quickness. Scouts love his effort and intensity. **Notable:** Four-year starter in college. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

10 Seneca Gray, Kentucky State
6-2 288 5.05
7th round

NFL comparison: Jeff Christy, Buccaneers

Fine athlete but lacks strength and power. Continues to add size and bulk but not explosive enough. Shows technically sound, quick feet. Has speed and agility to make downfield blocks. Real struggle comes head-on vs. defensive tackle. Does not have size or base to anchor vs. bull rush or blitz. Athletic ability and speed will get him looks, but he must add strength and bulk to make it as a reserve. **Notable:** Played every line position in college. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.5**

11 Chad Deal, Iowa
6-3⅝ 285 5.15
7th round

NFL comparison: Chris Gray, Seahawks

Outstanding speed and natural quickness for size. Still has a lot of aspects of game to work on but feet will earn him looks. Does not show great strength or ability to anchor at point of attack, but size is serviceable and frame has room to grow. Knows position well and understands defenses. Quickness gives him a chance, but he needs to add strength and explosion. **Notable:** Also started at guard and tackle. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.0**

12 Shaun O'Hara, Rutgers
6-2⅛ 275 5.30
7th round

NFL comparison: Tom Ackerman, Saints

Prospect on quickness and work ethic alone. Not enough strength to play head-on vs. defensive tackle. Has trouble with blitz and shows little leg drive in run game. Solid in space because of natural agility and shows good recognition when uncovered. More of a finesse player. Not big enough and gives up too much in run game to make it. **Notable:** Made team as walk-on. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.0**

Others: Paul Clasby, Colgate, 6-2¼, 277, 5.22; Ty Wise, Miami (Fla.), 6-0½, 280, 5.10; Jimmy Richards, Brigham Young, 6-5⅛, 293, 5.40; Brent Ludwig, Montana State, 6-5⅛, 293, 5.40; John Merandi, Notre Dame, 6-2¼, 300, 5.30.

TSN Player Ratings

Defensive Ends

OVERRATED
Shaun Ellis, Tennessee
A bit of a 'tweener whose stock could drop on draft day because he's not a pure DE. But still a first-round pick.

UNDERRATED
Clark Haggans, Colorado State
Former college walk-on lacks great size, but his productivity and intensity cannot be overlooked. Nice late-round pick.

SLEEPER
Hubert Thompson, Michigan State
A physical specimen who played just one season in college. Has all the tools but needs a lot of work.

STOCK ON THE RISE
John Frank, Utah
With more game experience, this raw talent could surprise a lot of people. Older prospect who turns 26 in July.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Robaire Smith, Michigan State
Never lived up to his hype as a big-play defender at the college level. May not be as good a pro as brother Fernando.

What scouts are looking for

NFL Average	Hgt.	Wgt.	40	NFL Minimum	Hgt.	Wgt.	40
	6-4	275	4.80		6-2	255	5.00

With most teams using a 4-3 defense, the demand for pass-rushing defensive ends has never been greater. In the 4-3, most of the pass rush comes from the ends. The right end should be his team's best pass rusher, providing speed and explosion off the corner. He should have great range and chase ability and at least be adequate against the run, even though that is not what he is being paid to do. If he is not at least adequate against the run, opposing offenses will run right at him, exploiting the entire defense. Many young players coming into the league withouth great size and strength are contributing as right ends, either on a full-time basis or as nickel rushers. The left end in the 4-3 has to have some pass-rush ability, too, but power is more important. He must be able to stop the run (most offenses are righthanded), and he must be able to jam the tight end at the line. In 3-4 defenses, the ends are more physical and are asked to play the run more than the pass. In this defense, the primary pass rush comes from the outside linebackers; the ends are asked to stuff the run and keep the blockers occupied. The DEs in a 3-4 are usually tough guys with size and some athleticism but not necessarily proficient pass rushers.

Though this group doesn't lack talent, there is a drop-off after the first three prospects. In the second tier, there is a group of 'tweeners that projects as outside linebackers or one-dimensional pass rushers. Courtney Brown (Penn State), who projects as a top-three pick, is the darling of this group because of his measurables and skills. He shows the type of impact qualities that Andre Wadsworth and Jevon Kearse displayed as prospects.

After Brown, Shaun Ellis (Tennessee) and John Engelberger (Virginia Tech) will be the next taken. Though they do not have the gamebreaking qualities of Brown, they are solid ends who can play the run and rush the passer.

Darren Howard (Kansas State), John Abraham (South Carolina), Adalius Thomas (Southern Mississippi) and Byron Frisch (BYU) are pass-rush specialists who will contribute in third-down situations as rookies, but their ability to play the run will detract from their overall productivity.

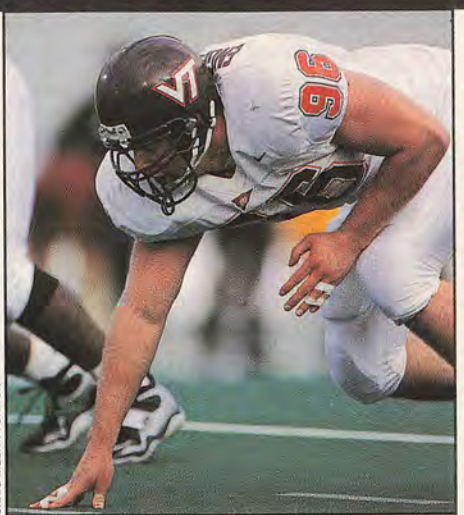
The end position always is interesting to monitor. Teams not only tend to reach in the early rounds to secure an impact pass rusher, but they also will take chances on developmental players who have potential.

***Denotes underclassman.**

1 Courtney Brown, Penn State
6-5 265 4.53 (40 time)
1st round
NFL comparison: Bruce Smith, Redskins

Vs. the run: Protects body well, does good job shedding with hands. Excellent at chasing play but has trouble when run at. Does better job on perimeter than in line. Explosive strength but will have to improve base vs. run. **Grade: 6.0**

Pass rush: Productive edge rusher. Not a blazer but tall and athletic with great instincts and upfield burst. Good agility and outstanding body control. Redirects smoothly to inside. Relentless in pursuit. Big-play specialist. **Grade: 7.5**



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

LONG ROAD: *Engelberger didn't make anyone forget Bruce Smith, but he did come a long way after entering Virginia Tech as a walk-on tight end.*

Initial quicks: Outstanding for his size. Great first step out of stance. Quickness is biggest asset as rusher. Wins most battles with first move. **Grade: 6.5**

Key and diagnose: Instinctive player with good feel for game. Occasionally will take himself out of play by overpursuing because he doesn't recognize run but shows enough to dominate. **Grade: 6.0**

Pursuit/tackling: Tremendous nose for ball. Tireless in pursuit. Technically sound tackler but doesn't show flair or strength. Efficient tackler who makes plays everywhere. **Grade: 6.0**

Notable: Hails from same hometown (Alvin, S.C., pop. 800) as former Georgia Tech quarterback Joe Hamilton.

Final analysis: Brown has tools scouts look for from ends. With added strength and improvement vs. run, will develop into dominating defender. **OVERALL GRADE: 32.0**

2 Shaun Ellis, Tennessee
6-4 285 4.80
1st round
NFL comparison: Tony Brackens, Jaguars

Vs. the run: Big, physical defender. Lots of inline qualities. Plays with great base and lower-body strength. Enough hand strength and skill. Dominant because of relentless pursuit and strength. Active player with marginal speed but good enough quicks to make plays tackle-to-tackle. **Grade: 6.5**

Pass rush: Not edge-rush specialist. Lots of skills but lacks speed to become factor. Good burst and excellent first move. Works to get to quarterback. More of drive rusher with quality first and second moves in pursuit and ability to push pocket. **Grade: 5.0**

Initial quicks: Average quickness off ball. Power in burst and will knock defender on heels. **Grade: 5.0**

Key and diagnose: Good read-and-react player. Has feel for position and rarely commits mental mistakes. Almost never runs himself out of play. **Grade: 6.5**

Pursuit/tackling: Covers lots of ground even though speed is only adequate. Plays with great motor and does outstanding job capitalizing on opportunities. Active backside pursuer. **Grade: 6.0**

Notable: Rebounded from injuries in 1998 car accident that nearly ended career.

Final analysis: Could be inside player but ultimately will do best work at end because of great motor. Size to dominate outside run game. Stock may slip because of 'tweener status but no question Ellis will become impact player. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

3 John Engelberger, Virginia Tech
6-4½ 269 4.58
1st or 2nd round
NFL comparison: Chad Bratzke, Colts

Vs. the run: Self-made playmaker. Decent speed, above-average strength, technically sound and exceptional motor. Disciplined off edge. Sideline-to-sideline player. Legs will get taken out and has potential to get pushed around. But should develop into tough run defender. **Grade: 5.5**

Pass rush: Little flash but shows quick first step and will seal off passing lanes. Polished rusher with excellent moves and feel for

rush. Doesn't show bull-rush qualities and can be redirected if locked onto. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Explosive first step. Shoots gap well inside and can win battle to corner on outside. Good dip of shoulder and comes off ball with leverage. **Grade: 6.0**
Key and diagnose: Knows assignments. Disciplined student of game. Reads keys well and recognizes blocks. **Grade: 6.0**
Pursuit/tackling: Effort-type player. Makes plays all over field. Solid tackler. Technically sound and makes presence felt. Efficient in traffic. Will fight through traffic and make plays because of athleticism. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Originally joined Tech as walk-on tight end.
Final analysis: Perfect approach to game. Not flashy player, but scouts love playmaking skills and mentality. Has frame to add size. With experience, will become one of better all-around ends. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

4 Darren Howard, Kansas State
6-3⅜ 272 4.90
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Rich Owens, Dolphins
Vs. the run: Good feel vs. run, solid technique but lacks strength. Nose for ball and will make plays on run. Struggles when run at. Needs better base. Can be engulfed by bigger, stronger offensive tackles. **Grade: 5.0**
Pass rush: Quick and explosive off ball but lacks speed of dominant pass rusher. Shows moves in pursuit. Will work inside and has burst to knock blockers off line. Good range and can chase down quarterbacks. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Excellent quickness but needs to do better job timing snap. With clean start, usually beats man off line. **Grade: 5.5**
Key and diagnose: Great job finding ball. Knows reads and rarely gets caught guessing. Excellent at distinguishing between run and pass. **Grade: 6.0**
Pursuit/tackling: Outstanding explosion when tackling. Lacks speed but works to get to ballcarrier. Good sideline-to-sideline skills. Pure playmaker in pursuit. Uses hands well to shed blocks and get through trash. **Grade: 6.0**
Notable: Kansas State's all-time leader in sacks.
Final analysis: Natural playmaker with feel for position. Lacks great strength and speed but flair as pass rusher makes him attractive. Needs to improve vs. run. Projects as pass-rush specialist. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

5 John Abraham, South Carolina
6-3 250 4.50
2nd round

NFL comparison: Michael Sinclair, Seahawks
Vs. the run: Good strength and ability to match up. Leg strength and explosion keep him alive but will have to improve hands and upper-body strength to compete when run at. Effective when lined up on tight end because of speed and quickness. **Grade: 4.5**
Pass rush: Excellent quickness and explosion off edge. Great body control and ability to turn corner. Plays with leverage in passing game. Lacks bull-rush potential. **Grade: 6.0**
Initial quicks: Explosive off ball. Usually wins first-step battle. Gets good jump and shows shoulder dip out of starting position. **Grade: 5.5**
Key and diagnose: Good job recognizing off snap. Reads keys well and rarely takes himself out of play. Sees block coming and finds ball. Excellent nose for ball. **Grade: 6.0**
Pursuit/tackling: High-effort player with impressive range. Good job fighting through traffic and making plays on move. Solid tackler with explosion through ballcarrier. Big-play flair and good speed to ball. **Grade: 6.0**
Notable: Played outside linebacker as senior.
Final analysis: Tweener who played a lot of linebacker in college but projects as rush end because of athleticism and potential to play run close to line. Has speed and playmaking ability, but needs to prove he can hold up vs. run. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.0**

6 Adalius Thomas, Southern Miss
6-2½ 256 4.58
2nd round

NFL comparison: Jason Taylor, Dolphins
Vs. the run: Gets by on quickness and aggressiveness. Undersized run defender doesn't stack up well at line, especially when teams run at him. Adequate at shedding blocks and playing with leverage but is mostly successful vs. run when shooting gaps. **Grade: 4.5**
Pass rush: Quick off ball with upfield burst. Classic pass-rush specialist. Lacks bull-rush qualities. Lone weapon is quickness and speed off corner. **Grade: 7.0**
Initial quicks: Relies heavily on quicks. Excellent first-step burst and does great job beating blockers. **Grade: 6.0**
Key and diagnose: Instincts a concern. Tends to get too far upfield vs. run. Bursts upfield with little regard to keys. Hasn't been asked to diagnose plays. **Grade: 4.0**
Pursuit/tackling: More of drag-down type. Adequate strength as tackler but plays from sideline-to-sideline and makes plays in pursuit. Tends to overrun plays. **Grade: 5.0**
Notable: Played in 22 games for basketball team as redshirt freshman.

SPOTLIGHT
ADEWALE OGUNLEYE

PAUL WISELY/ TSN

Rehab has become the constant in Adewale Ogunleye's life.

In the morning, in the afternoon, even on Saturdays, Ogunleye puts time in the weight room, the training room or the swimming pool. It takes that kind of dedication when you're trying to make the NFL after tearing an ACL, MCL, posterior cruciate ligament and lateral meniscus. Ogunleye, a defensive end at Indiana, already had earned his degree in English when he returned as a fifth-year senior last fall. Then he suffered his season-ending injury in an October 9 game against Northwestern when his own teammate accidentally clipped him. He started rehab October 26 and is determined to return to football as soon as possible and better than ever.

"Even if the NFL wasn't there, I'd still be trying to push it just as hard," says Ogunleye, who hadn't missed a game in his football career before the injury. "I like beating the odds, and I want to be back where I was before the injury. Whoever takes me is going to be a lucky team because I'm going back to where I've been."

That's the question for NFL teams: Can he return to the form that made him Indiana's all-time leader in sacks and tackles for loss? Ogunleye says he'll be back at "110 percent," and Hoosiers coach Cam Cameron says when Ogunleye puts his mind to something, it's as good as done.

But will NFL teams take the chance? It depends, says former Redskins coordinator of scouting Chuck Banker, who will direct the new Houston franchise's pro scouting efforts. His team, for one, is in need of defensive line help.

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," says Banker. "Somebody may say he's worth it and take a chance on him. Others may not want to take the risk."

His upside potential as a pass rusher may be worth the risk. Ogunleye has the frame (6-5) to add to his 260 pounds, and he also has the potential to improve and the willingness to learn.

"Some teams want you as long as you have speed, height, production, but with us, you could be the greatest athlete in the world, but if you're a bad guy, in our minds that's going to tarnish you a little," Banker says. "His intangibles will help him, and in some eyes, raise him. You still have to go on what does he do, but he has those things (the physical attributes), so the intangibles—work ethic, intelligence—elevate him."

Ogunleye has plans after football: he wants to become a lawyer. He even could go to Nigeria, where his grandfather was considered a king, and be a prince. But right now, the man whose surname means "Iron God" would settle for becoming NFL royalty.—*Stacy Clardie*

Final analysis: Pass-rush specialist whose lack of size and strength will limit him to nickel situations. **OVERALL GRADE: 26.5**

7 Mao Tosi, Idaho
6-5⅛ 291 4.85
2nd or 3rd round

NFL comparison: Ebenezer Ekuban, Cowboys

Former basketball player with tremendous athleticism and size. Explosive pass rusher with quickness and burst. Adequate speed but has second gear. Excellent job shutting down passing lanes. Raw prospect needs work on technique, especially shedding blockers. Adequate strength at point of attack and needs to play with better base vs. run. Still learning to use size to advantage. Struggles to neutralize blocks, particularly vs. run. Shows good instincts for player with two seasons of experience. **Notable:** Named Alaska high school basketball player of year as senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.0**

8 Cornelius Griffin, Alabama
6-3¼ 288 4.84
3rd round

NFL comparison: Chuck Smith, Panthers

Upfield, attack-type player with great motor. Size a concern; may project as one-dimensional pass rusher. Good first step and burst. Exceptional for his size at changing direction and is quick to inside. Struggles vs. run. Gets pushed around by more physical blockers. Recognition needs work; tends to take himself out of plays by getting too far upfield. Has frame to improve against run but needs time to improve keys and develop feel. **Notable:** Led Tide linemen in tackles last season with 53. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

9 Byron Frisch, Brigham Young
6-4⅝ 265 4.66
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Neil Smith, free agent

Raw prospect with great upside because of size/speed combo. Initial quickness and makes impact as penetrator. Needs work on technique and pass-rush moves but rates fairly high on skills and potential to develop. High effort-type guy who uses speed, with tremendous motor to chase. Concern is strength. Struggles to shed blocks and gets pushed around. Strong hands but must learn how to use them better to create separation. Has trouble playing straight up on tackles because of weight. **Notable:** Married with two children. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

10 Leonardo Carson, Auburn
6-1⅝ 279 5.13
4th round

NFL comparison: Al Fontenot, free agent

A 3-4 end who could project as inside player in 4-3. Tough run defender with good strength. More of one-gap player who plays with outstanding base. Lacks good 40 speed but has burst off ball and consistently beats blocker to position. Needs stronger upper body but slides laterally to play off blocks. Good moves as rusher and closes well on quarterbacks. Fluid for size and shows spin as rusher. Great effort but lack of feel for position and poor recognition are concerns. **Notable:** Played quarterback as high school senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.5**

11 John Frank, Utah
6-3⅞ 272 4.85
4th round

NFL comparison: Regan Upshaw, Raiders

Underrated prospect who will move up many teams' draft board. Chance to develop into solid player because of size, athleticism and speed. Competent pass rusher because of speed to corner and above-average initial quickness. Raw and will need work on technique. Needs to use hands better. Trouble when forced inside. Doesn't play with great base vs. run but has frame to bulk up and has lower-body strength. Developmental player. **Notable:** Signed with Utah in 1992 and then went on two-year Mormon mission to Spain. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

12 Adewale Ogunleye, Indiana
6-4⅜ 262 4.96
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Cedric Jones, Giants

Experienced and productive, but '99 season ended early because of knee injury. Long-legged with good pass-rush. More quick than fast, with good agility and pass-rush moves, especially spin and club. Nice upfield qualities, despite marginal speed. Fluidity and body control allow him to test tackles' feet. Lacks strength and won't overpower but uses hands to create separation and set up moves. Mobile run defender who makes backside plays. Never gives up and works hard to get down line vs. run. Trouble inside because of marginal strength. Not great read-and-react guy and tends to take himself out of plays. Gets overpowered vs. run when he doesn't beat blocker to position. **Notable:** Indiana's career leader in sacks and tackles for loss. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.0**

13 Robaire Smith, Michigan State
6-3 280 5.00
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Phil Hansen, Bills

Inconsistency has plagued him. Size and skills make him legitimate prospect but still has areas that need work. Adequate initial quickness but gets reached too easily off line. Holds up well at point of attack and gets enough push to be effective but does poor job shedding blocks and gets caught in traffic. Lacks speed to dominate off edge and leg drive and explosion to develop into bull-rusher. Projects as reserve with strength to hold up vs. run but limited room to grow as pass rusher. **Notable:** Brother Fernando plays for Ravens. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

14 Brian Young, Texas-El Paso
6-2½ 258 4.87
5th round

NFL comparison: Michael Bankston, Bengals

Projects as pass-rush specialist with enough size to compete. Excellent first step and good body lean in pass rush. More quick than fast and not big or physical enough to compete vs. run; lacks frame to grow. A feel for position, good technical skills and relentless motor. Can help in rush situations. **Notable:** The 1999 WAC defensive player of year. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

15 Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila, San Diego St.
6-4 240 4.60
5th round

NFL comparison: Tony Bryant, Raiders

Continues to fall on draft boards because he's a 'tweener; lacks bulk and strength to match up vs. run and has limited experience at outside linebacker. Uses hands well to get through traffic and great backside chaser who shows sideline-to-sideline qualities. Enough burst off line as rusher to contribute on third downs but still needs work on moves and feel. **Notable:** Parents were born in Nigeria; he was raised in Los Angeles. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

16 Clark Haggans, Colorado State
6-3 245 4.80
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Grant Wistrom, Rams

'Tweener who has experience at end but because of small frame may be forced to outside linebacker. Active with great athleticism. Good quicks and burst off ball. Plays sideline-to-sideline. Skill and big-play flair as pass rusher. Explosive strength but lacks bulk and lower-body strength to match up vs. run. **Notable:** Arrived at Colorado State as walk-on. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

17 James Hall, Michigan
6-2 264 4.85
6th round

NFL comparison: Greg Spires, Patriots

Lacks size and skills aren't impressive but is natural who can contribute. Decent speed and shows pass-rush ability but is more motor-and-chase player. Great strength for size and plays run with leverage. Nose for ball and does good job shedding. Size is concern because he projects as passing-down specialist without great speed. **Notable:** From same high school as former Michigan back Leroy Hoard. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

18 Hubert Thompson, Mich. State *
6-4 275
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Derrick Alexander, Browns

Academic troubles caused him to enter draft early. Has tools and upside but little experience. Has flair as pass rusher. Upfield burst and speed to turn corner. Raw and lacks feel for position. Won't show lots of moves in pass rush. Size/strength/speed combination is outstanding, which may tempt NFL teams. Sideline-to-sideline guy but also has strength to match up when teams try to run at him. **Notable:** Played one season after missing 1997 for academic reasons and redshirting in '98. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

Others: Aaron Humphrey, Texas, 6-2⅝, 248, 4.95; Travis Griffith, Virginia, 6-3¼, 254, 4.70; Quinton Reese, Auburn, 6-3, 250, 5.01; Rameel Connor, Illinois, 6-3, 269, 5.03; Aaron Fields, Troy State, 6-3½, 235, 4.79; Dwight Johnson, Baylor, 6-3¼, 280, 4.90; D.J. Cooper, Arkansas, 6-3, 276, 5.01; Gillis Wilson, Southern, 6-1, 280, 4.80; Gannon Shepherd, Duke, 6-7, 273, 4.95; Sam Sherrod, San Jose State, 6-4, 251; Tim Watson, Rowan, 6-3, 284, 5.00; Lamont Bryant, Notre Dame, 6-3, 257, 4.95.

TSN Player Ratings

Defensive Tackles

OVERRATED
Kendrick Clancy, Mississippi
His bread and butter in college won't translate to the pros. Lacks the size to hold up against the run.

UNDERRATED
Jerry Johnson, Florida State
Dominating run-stuffer who did not receive enough credit playing next to Corey Simon. Will emerge as NFL force.

SLEEPER
Chris Combs, Duke
An all-around prospect with the tools to be a productive NFL player. Has knack for disrupting plays.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Darwin Walker, Tennessee
Dominating Senior Bowl week proved his worth. Will be first DT taken after Corey Simon.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Fred Robbins, Wake Forest
Does he have enough passion for the game to improve? Scouts have their doubts.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-3½	295	5.00	NFL Minimum	6-0½	275	5.20

This position has evolved quite a bit over the years. With 29 teams playing a 4-3 defense, today's game usually features a pair of big, massive defensive tackles who line up over the guards and are asked to stuff the run. But in a perfect world, you would like one of these tackles to be a "two-gap" type run stuffer and the other to be a quick inside penetrator. Quickness is very important at this position, and many tackles are very successful pass rushers because they play one-gap techniques and can put inside pressure on the quarterback. The tackles must be tough enough to mix it up inside and stack and control the line of scrimmage. Quickness and explosion are very important. In a 3-4 defense, the lone tackle becomes a nose tackle and usually lines up over the center. The qualities are the same, but he is usually a two-gap type run stuffer who can jam the inside and free the inside linebacker to make plays. Mammoth nose tackles like Buffalo's Ted Washington may not have a lot of pass-rush ability, but they certainly force the opposing offense to run to the outside.

This has become an appealing position over the past few years with more impact players coming out. This class has a few flashy players and some throwback run-stuffers. Florida State's Corey Simon, who is a probable top-five pick, is the complete package as a run defender and pass rusher. Darwin Walker of Tennessee and Jerry Johnson from Florida State are solid run-stuffers, and Chris Hovan of Boston College and Jabari Issa from Washington penetrate well.

Expect a run on defensive tackles late in the first day; teams will fill needs for fear of being left out by waiting too long. Kendrick Clancey of Mississippi and Nebraska's Steve Warren should sneak into the top three rounds because of their potential and ability to contribute as rookies.

Another group usually is taken in the middle rounds, but this year might be different because there is less depth. Too many players have glaring weaknesses.

***Denotes underclassman.**

1 Corey Simon, Florida State
6-1¾ 293 4.80 (40 time)
1st round
NFL comparison: Bryant Young, 49ers

Vs. run: Has great leverage; holds ground and sheds blocks well. Can pursue laterally and uses hands well to get down line. Makes plays from tackle to tackle with quickness and ability to work though traffic. Controls blockers while locating the ball. **Grade: 7.0**

Pass rush: One-gap rusher. Excellent quickness and burst off snap. Has enough strength in bull rush. Is explosive to quarterback. **Grade: 6.5**

Initial quicks: Excellent first step. Stays low out of stance. Gets extra burst to gap. Anticipates snap and beats blocker to position. **Grade: 6.5**

Key and diagnose: Good feel for position. Knows reads and executes well. Outstanding at locating ball and flowing.

DARREN CARROLL FOR TSN

HOT AND COLD: *Warren will need to shake his history of inconsistency to succeed in the NFL.*

Reads offensive plays well and has good down/distance instincts. **Grade: 6.5**

Pursuit/tackling: Takes excellent angles and rarely misses tackle. Not overly explosive but technically sound and wraps up. Chases from backside. Covers ground laterally; makes plays down line. **Grade: 6.0**

Notable: Two-time consensus All-American.

Final analysis: Top pick at this position; could go in top three overall. All-around talent with tremendous athleticism and big-play potential. **OVERALL GRADE: 32.5**

2 Darwin Walker, Tennessee
6-2 280 4.95
1st or 2nd round
NFL comparison: Tim Bowens, Dolphins

Vs. run: Great strength for size. Plays with tremendous base; rarely gets uprooted. Controls blockers with outstanding hands and lower body strength. High-effort player. Pursues from all over field. Has trouble when he comes out of stance too high but is improving. **Grade: 7.0**

Pass rush: Outstanding quickness and burst off snap. Regularly beats blocker to position. One-gap rusher who gets upfield and causes problems. **Grade: 5.5**

Initial quicks: Strong part of game. Excellent burst out of stance. Anticipates snap well, explodes into gap. Feet are as good as anyone's at the position. **Grade: 6.0**

Key and diagnose: Knows position well; good feel for opponents' tendencies. Great student; works hard to gain every advantage. Adequate at locating ball. More of a one-gap, upfield guy who will explode out of stance and clog gap rather than read and react. **Grade: 5.5**

Pursuit/tackling: Does not have great speed but quickness is outstanding; good at chasing plays from backside. Makes few plays down line. Strong tackler with good technique and lower body strength. Only problem is playing too high and eliminating base. **Grade: 5.5**

Notable: Also starred in shot put for Volunteers.

Final analysis: Dominating one-gap run-stuffer with exceptional strength. Not a big pass rusher, but uses strong, bull-rush skills

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

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to generate penetration. Late first- or early second-round pick because of dominant skills up front. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.5**

3 Chris Hovan, Boston College
6-2⅝ 295 4.97
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: John Randle, Vikings

Vs. run: Productive because of quickness and non-stop motor. Extremely active up front and has strength to hold up at point of attack. Excellent at controlling blockers at line. Penetrates well; can ward off double team. Must work to beat blocker to position; has enough hand technique and arm strength to compete. **Grade: 5.5**

Pass rush: Great burst out of stance. Relentless pursuer. Wins most battles with quickness and motor. Shows some moves and should continue to improve. Knows how to split double teams. **Grade: 6.0**

Initial quicks: Fastest first step in this class. Explodes off ball; comes out of stance low with good leverage; great initial penetration. **Grade: 6.5**

Key and diagnose: Instinctive player with good feel. Reads and flows to play. Student of game; gains edge in film work. **Grade: 6.0**

Pursuit/tackling: Sideline to sideline player with great lateral movement. Makes plays on move. Chases down plays from backside. Strong, technically sound tackler with some flair. **Grade: 5.5**

Notable: High school won state titles all four of his years there.

Final analysis: Not overly gifted, but few match his intensity. Has enough speed, strength and quickness to dominate because he maximizes potential. Might slip to second round because of some questions about run-stuffing and athleticism. Should emerge over time. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.5**

4 Jerry Johnson, Florida State
6-0⅜ 292 4.85
2nd round

NFL comparison: Sam Adams, free agent

Vs. run: Top run-stuffer in class. Excellent at clogging gaps while flowing to ball. Plays with tremendous center of gravity and rarely pushed around. Outstanding lower body strength; has lateral movement to make plays down line. **Grade: 7.5**

Pass rush: Quick first step. Good speed for size. Plays hard; shows some upfield burst out of stance. More a bull rusher who will push pocket back, but has quickness and straight-line speed to slip gaps. Not a huge threat. Should gain solid penetration. **Grade: 5.5**

Initial quicks: Underrated quickness and explosion. Gets out of stance very well for frame. Keeps leverage in first couple of steps. **Grade: 5.5**

Key and diagnose: Penetrates in one gap but knows schemes and assignments. Has nose for ball and makes plays on move because he sees into backfield extremely well. **Grade: 5.5**

Pursuit/tackling: Works hard to chase plays. Not great speed but takes solid angles and wraps up. Not an explosive tackler but strong enough to make an impact. Technically sound overall. Makes plays on move. Good at keeping leverage when tackling. **Grade: 5.0**

Notable: Corey Simon's college roommate.

Final analysis: Overlooked some because he played next to Simon. A punishing run defender who will emerge as a force in middle. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

5 Steve Warren, Nebraska
6-0⅝ 314 5.10
3rd round

NFL comparison: Henry Thomas, Patriots

Short, thick-set player. Uses size to play with great leverage and get underneath blockers. Good two-gap, read/react qualities with excellent nose for ball. Lacks great speed. More of a short-area defender who makes few plays on the move. Has enough lateral movement to make plays down line. Initial quickness and explosion make him a competent pass rusher. Comes out of stance too high. Lacks pursuit speed. Inconsistent player. **Notable:** Has sung national anthem at basketball games and sings at weddings. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.0**

6 Jabari Issa, Washington
6-4½ 268 4.94
3rd round

NFL comparison: Chad Hennings, Cowboys

Extremely fluid for size. Makes up for lack of speed with burst and quickness. Consistently beats blockers to position. Average strength but plays with enough leverage. Has frame to add bulk. Needs to improve footwork. Overextends and gets pushed around if base is not set. Excellent natural skills as pass rusher; could play outside as an edge rusher. Key to development is playing run; otherwise, he projects as pass-rush specialist. **Notable:** Returned fumble for TD as sophomore. **OVERALL GRADE: 26.5**

7 Junior Ioane, Arizona State
6-4 304 5.20
3rd round

NFL comparison: Daryl Gardener, Dolphins

Size/strength prospect with marginal speed. More quick than fast and shows burst out of stance. Excellent production in college. Has big-play potential. Uses long wingspan to gain separation and control blockers. Has potential as inside pass rusher but needs work on technique. Good lateral movement; projects as two-gap player because of recognition and footwork. Plays from tackle to tackle. **Notable:** Won state shot put title in high school. **OVERALL GRADE: 26.0**

8 Kendrick Clancy, Mississippi
6-0⅞ 272 5.06
3rd round

NFL comparison: Jim Flanigan, Bears

Small, overrated player, but plays bigger than size. Excellent motor; wins battles on quickness. Projects as a two-gap, read/react player. Good strength for size. Anticipates and uses hands well to prevent blocker from getting into body. Will have some trouble vs. run but has enough leverage to compete. Not a huge pass rusher. Penetrates on quicks and burst. Lacks speed. Not a bull-rush threat. **Notable:** Had 191 tackles in two years at East Central Community College (Mo.). **OVERALL GRADE: 24.5**

9 Robert Brannon, Iowa State
6-3¾ 294 5.08
4th round

NFL comparison: Eric Swann, Cardinals

Converted defensive end. Not a great athlete but has enough quickness and burst. Comes out of stance too high. Plays too erect, loses power. Excellent natural strength, especially in upper body. Strength is explosive; can beat blocker with initial pop. Not a dynamic pass rusher but is agile enough to hold his own. Projects as reserve because of consistent production. **Notable:** Did not play high school football. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

10 Fred Robbins, Wake Forest
6-3⅞ 301 4.89
4th round

NFL comparison: Travis Hall, Falcons

Has tools as inside player. Great size, strength, speed and quickness. Excellent at getting out of stance. Shows good pop and explosion. Fluid athlete who can make plays down line and can chase. Biggest problems are consistency and passion. Can be handled because he leans into block instead of shedding it. Could be great if he attacks every down. **Notable:** Had three sacks in Aloha Bowl. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.5**

11 Nat Williams, Virginia Tech
6-1¾ 278 4.95
5th round

NFL comparison: Brad Ottis, free agent

Undersized. Relies on quickness, agility to make plays on move. Held up well at point of attack but might have trouble with size, strength of NFL. Has good leverage. Uses quickness to shoot gap, avoid lock-ons. Inside rush player with some run-stuffing ability. Won't be every-down player because of size. **Notable:** Can't swim, but wants to become merchant seaman or work for Jacksonville Port Authority, if NFL does not pan out. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.5**

12 Chris Combs, Duke
6-4¼ 274 4.98
5th round

NFL comparison: Luther Elliss, Lions

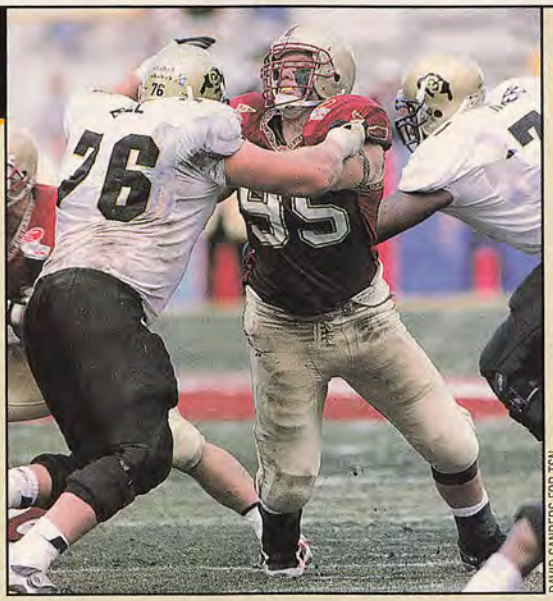
Intriguing prospect. Tremendous tools. Shows flashes as big-time player but has not put it all together. Good strength and agility. Good feel for position; studies game well. Real threat with great mobility. Good lateral movement and handwork. Gets engulfed if not using right angles. Does not have run-stuffing strength. Not a real pass-rush threat but penetrates and disrupts. **Notable:** Duke's career leader in tackles for loss. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.5**

13 Al Lucas, Troy State
6-0¾ 286 5.03
5th round

NFL comparison: Brad Culpepper, Buccaneers

Small and quick with excellent instincts. Two-gap player who finds ball. Excellent

SPOTLIGHT
CHRIS HOVAN


DAVID SANDERS FOR TSN

Chris Hovan will not look quite as intimidating next year without his face painted with battle-ready eye black—the NFL recently banned players from such rituals. But if Hovan plays the same type of game without his John Randle-esque disguise as he did with it, NFL quarterbacks will learn his face, like Randle's, means run for your life.

"I was very impressed with him; he really stepped up at the Senior Bowl," says former Steelers director of college scouting Max McCartney. "He showed more ability than people thought he had, especially as a pass rusher. I think he'll be highly sought-after come draft day."

Hovan, who had a team-high 11 sacks at Boston College in '99, says his technique and strength allow him to get to the quarterback. "I think my initial jolt and great upper-body strength will help me," he says. "Nothing's perfect, but my release is good and I can get off a blocker and make a play."

Making plays is something he did a lot of last season, recording 20 tackles for loss. That type of production forced Boston College coaches to play him at defensive end some, instead of his more natural position of tackle/nose guard.

"It worked out well," he says. "I'm a projected tackle and I like being inside more. It's fun to mix it up in there."

Mixing it up often translates into talking trash—and Hovan does his share, though he's not yet in Randle's league. Randle is "way more animated," Hovan says, "but I like to talk to my opponents. It makes it more fun."

Pro scouts have figured out that Hovan is not a go-through-the-motions player. He is aggressive, intense, strong and quick after the snap. "It's hard to find his intensity in a young defensive lineman," says Ravens director of college scouting Phil Savage. I think he will get his share of sacks and his effort will reward him." *—Mark Wetzel*

upper body strength. Uses hands to create separation. Plays with adequate base but needs to work on lower body strength. Does not drive legs well. Can be overpowered if he's locked on. Decent pass-rusher. Works hard to get upfield. Beats blocker with initial quickness. Hard practice player; shows leadership but sometimes takes a play off. **Notable:** Won '99 Buck Buchanan Award as I-AA defensive player of year. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.0**

14 Earnest Grant, Ark.-Pine Bluff
6-5¼ 296 4.93
5th round

NFL comparison: Larry Smith, Jaguars

Raw talent with ton of potential. Outstanding footwork, great lateral movement. Needs technical work. Biggest problem is coming out of stance too high, slowing initial explosion. Needs to use hands more. Lets blockers get into body too much. Has lower body strength for bull rush if he improves base. Not ready to contribute but could improve tremendously. **Notable:** Played basketball for the Golden Lions as sophomore and junior and led team in blocks as a sophomore. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

15 Jerry DeLoach, California
6-2¾ 329 5.10
6th round

NFL comparison: Gilbert Brown, free agent

Massive inside presence with great lower body strength. One-gap type with good upfield burst, initial explosion. Collapses pocket with power but does not chase quarterback well. Average quickness and footwork. Sometimes loses leverage in blocking. Needs to take better angles and anticipate more. Clogs gap vs. run but will not make many plays. Could prosper in 4-3 by taking up space and protecting linebackers. **Notable:** Squat presses 635 pounds. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

16 Alvin McKinley, Mississippi St.
6-3½ 290 5.34
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: Keith Hamilton, Giants

Active player for size. Good inside quickness and nice first step. Good body control. Gets leverage out of stance. Penetrates enough to disrupt blocking. Quicker than fast. Lacks chasing speed. Makes few plays outside tackles. Needs to bulk up to play with bigger, more physical blockers. Active and productive player, but size is a concern. **Notable:** Brother Dennis played fullback for Bulldogs. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

17 Keith Jackson, Cheyney (Pa.) *
6-4 290 4.90
7th round

NFL comparison: Grady Jackson, Raiders

Ideal size and enough strength to make it. Biggest concern is playing vs. bigger, faster linemen. Good initial step and enough leverage and explosiveness to play run. Adequate footwork but needs to work on technique. Has one-gap pass-rushing skills. Could beat blockers with quickness. Needs to translate natural strength to on-field strength. Must penetrate more in bull rush. Could move up board with impressive workouts. **Notable:** Took two years off after high school, was a landscaper, before enrolling at Cheyney. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

18 Sherrod Peace, North Carolina
6-2 282 4.82
7th round

NFL comparison: Russell Maryland, Raiders

Limited exposure in college. Great natural skills and athleticism. Solid burst out of stance. Penetrates with good angles. Some initial quickness but has trouble shedding blocks. Needs to improve handwork. Does not show enough punch and allows blockers to get into body. More effective when he can shade to one side of blocker. Lacks strength and lower body explosion to succeed when lined up head-on. Lacks size. Has trouble at point of attack. Projects as reserve but lacks talent to play every down. **Notable:** His cousin Jason was receiver at UNC; twin Sherron was running back at Howard. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

19 Jeffrey Dunlap, Auburn *
6-5 275 4.95
7th round

NFL comparison: Marcus Spriggs, Browns

Good frame and athleticism but is not polished. Two-gap prospect with quick feet and some read/react skills. Strength and leverage are concerns. Comes out of stance too high; allows blockers to get inside pads. Needs to do better at shedding with hands. Part-time defender in college. Was surprise early entry. Rangy for inside player; has good quickness and penetrating skills. Shows flash vs. run but needs to bulk up. **Notable:** Played nine games and made 16 tackles last season. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

Others: Derrick Corley, Syracuse, 6-1¼, 309, 5.03; Rob Meier, Washington State, 6-5, 272, 4.94; Mac Tuiaea, Washington, 6-5½, 269, 4.94; Damian Gregory, Illinois State, 6-1⅞, 296, 5.10; Richard Seals, Utah, 6-1⅜, 299, 5.19; Carl Bradley, Virginia Tech, 6-2⅜, 283, 4.92; Josh Williams, Michigan, 6-3⅛, 276, 5.00; Mike Derouselle, Houston, 6-2⅜, 298, 5.24.

TSN Player Ratings

Inside Linebackers

OVERRATED
Marcus Bell, Arizona
Excellent in space but gets overpowered too often as an inside player. Just not big enough to excel in NFL.

UNDERRATED
T.J. Slaughter, Southern Mississippi
A sideline-to-sideline playmaker with a nose for the ball. Size and speed are adequate but needs to improve strength.

SLEEPER
Keith Kelsey, Florida
A much better athlete than most people realize. Was hidden behind some future NFL linebackers at Florida.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Jeff Ulbrich, Hawaii
Combination of lateral movement and strength makes him an interesting prospect.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Danny Clark, Illinois
Never developed into the playmaker he was projected to be. Still a better athlete than football player.

What scouts are looking for

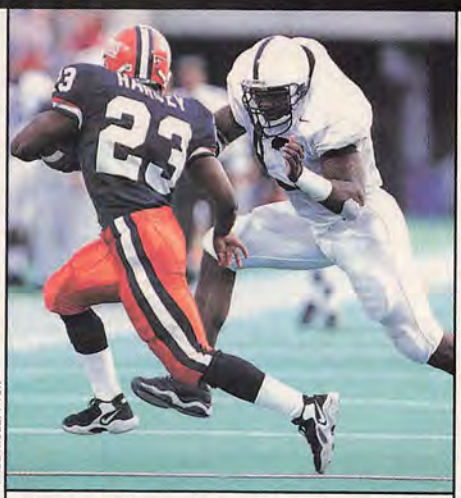
	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-1½	240	4.75	NFL Minimum	5-11½	235	4.80

Often the captain of the defense, inside linebackers must have great leadership qualities, along with intelligence and instincts. He has to be a tackle-to-tackle run stuffer with the ability to get off blocks and make plays on the line. Most successful middle linebackers in today's game produce big sack and tackle numbers because their defensive tackles protect them by not allowing blockers to get to their feet. A perfect example is Miami MLB Zach Thomas, who makes a lot of plays courtesy of tackles Tim Bowens and Daryl Gardener, who do an excellent job of protecting Thomas and keeping him free to run to the football. Many middle linebackers are not great athletes; instead, they are tough, smart, short-range guys. Typically, they play only on first and second down, coming out for a nickel package consisting of five or six defensive backs and one or two athletic linebackers. The few middle linebackers who stay in on passing situations often are the leaders their defense rallies around.

This is a slim group with a lot of undersized athletes who do not project as dominant inside players. Rob Morris, Brandon Short, Marcus Bell and Mark Simoneau share a lot of the same qualities: They are active players who lack the pure size and strength as inside run stuffers. Morris is the top prospect, but the most interesting player is Short, whose speed and leadership qualities rank him as a possible late first-round selection.

1 Rob Morris, Brigham Young
6-1¾ 247 4.77 (40 time)
1st round

NFL comparison: Zach Thomas, Dolphins
Vs. inside run: Could have some trouble against bigger offensive linemen. Smaller inside player but does excellent job of shedding blocks. Plays with enough leverage to match up in small areas. Enough instincts to avoid traffic in middle. Uses quick feet and impressive lateral movement to avoid contact. **Grade: 5.5**
Vs. outside run: Excellent read-and-react player. Has nose for ball and good speed to chase. More of an active, sideline-to-sideline player. Covers lot of ground. Shows good feel and hands to avoid traffic. **Grade: 7.0**
Blitz/pass rush: Instinctive pass rusher. Sees seams open in front of him and attacks. Enough speed and quickness to get to quarterback. Good burst through hole. Effectiveness is neutralized if he is reached because he lacks power to push pocket. **Grade: 6.0**
Key and diagnose: Exceptional feel for game. Playmaking ability stems from instincts and decision making. Reads and reacts to play. Rarely takes false step. No wasted motion. **Grade: 6.5**
Pursuit/tackling: All over the field. Able to chase from backside. Quicker than fast but shows good speed from inside and ability to make plays on sideline. Sure tackler, technically sound. Not real explosive tackler but has good lower-body strength and will lower shoulder and pack a punch. **Grade: 6.0**
Notable: Is an Eagle Scout and volunteer at Special Olympics.
Final analysis: The top inside linebacker because of playmaking ability and quickness. Size is bit of a concern, but he plays with enough leverage to match up in middle. **OVERALL GRADE: 31.0**


PAUL WISELY / TSN

PENN PAL: *Coach Joe Paterno often touted the linebacking achievements of Short (above) over those of the more celebrated LaVar Arrington.*

2 Brandon Short, Penn State
6-3 250 4.65
1st round

NFL comparison: Chris Claiborne, Lions
Vs. inside run: More tough than strong in middle. Will have trouble matching up at point of attack vs. some bigger offensive linemen. Is explosive and does excellent job of lowering shoulder to take on lead blocker. Will shoot gap and fill hole. Needs to play with more leverage as tackler. **Grade: 6.0**
Vs. outside run: Shows good feel for traffic and uses hands well to shed. Excellent speed, good quickness. Can make plays all over field. Will get to sideline but needs to take better angles in pursuit. **Grade: 6.5**
Blitz/pass rush: Good burst through line. Not real threat to slip gap and rush passer. More of bull rusher with great power. Can push pocket because he fills hard. **Grade: 5.5**
Key and diagnose: Adequate feel for position. Reads keys well and has good reaction skills. Needs to improve pursuit angles and shows some difficulties in pursuit. Takes too many false steps and has tendency to overextend. **Grade: 5.5**
Pursuit/tackling: Lots of natural talent as chase player, but technique and footwork are suspect. Covers lot of ground because of raw speed and quickness. Will use power to shed and agility to avoid but wastes lot of motion in pursuit. Powerful tackler, extremely productive in short area. Gets exposed in open field because he gets out of position and overextends. Needs lot of technical work in this area. Tremendous upside because of natural speed and athletic ability. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: In college, enjoyed playing chess with teammate LaVar Arrington.
Final analysis: Physical specimen as inside player. Has ton of raw talent and potential to improve tremendously. Could sneak into first round because of natural playmaking ability and power but would be bit of a risk because he's far from polished. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

3 Marcus Bell, Arizona
6-1½ 233 4.60
2nd round

NFL comparison: Barron Wortham, Titans
Vs. inside run: Doesn't match up well because of size limitations but fills gaps hard and plays with enough leverage to compete. Has better strength than size indicates. Uses upper body extremely well to uproot blockers. **Grade: 5.0**
Vs. outside run: Speed and quickness are outstanding. Extremely active and can make plays all over field. Will have some trouble when reached but has good enough feel and shows ability to use hands to shed blockers and fight through traffic. **Grade: 6.5**
Blitz/pass rush: Excellent vision as pass rush-

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

er. Great burst and acceleration through line. Not much of a bull rusher; real strength is as speed rusher. Sees crease open and shows great attack skills. **Grade: 5.5**

Key and diagnose: Outstanding read-and-react player. Makes all his reads and flows to ball extremely well. Has nose for ball and takes few false steps in pursuit. **Grade: 6.0**

Pursuit/tackling: Outstanding space player. Takes excellent angles in pursuit and has speed and quickness to chase down plays from behind. Covers a lot of ground and is sure tackler, especially in open field. Isn't dominant inside playmaker but plays with enough leverage and shows enough power to pack punch on isolation tackles. **Grade: 5.5**

Notable: Coach Dick Tomey called Bell the best inside linebacker he has coached at Arizona.

Final analysis: Extremely active player. Impresses coaches and scouts with athletic ability and flair as pass rusher. Is solid in pass coverage; can stay on field for all three downs. In right system, with enough protection from defensive tackles, could emerge as playmaker. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

4 Mark Simoneau, Kansas State
5-11¾ 238 4.60
2nd round

NFL comparison: Anthony Simmons, Seahawks

Vs. inside run: Overachiever limited by size but extremely active. Plays bigger than measurables would indicate. Excellent toughness and natural strength but will have trouble at point of attack vs. bigger, more physical blockers. Needs to play with better leverage between tackles. **Grade: 5.0**

Vs. outside run: Sideline-to-sideline player with tremendous agility and quickness. Makes quick reads and flows to ball. Does good job in pursuit but must avoid being reached in order to make plays. Will have to improve change of direction and body control to get over congestion in middle of field. **Grade: 6.5**

Blitz/pass rush: Active pass rusher with great motor. Has good instincts as inside rusher; sees crease open and attacks. Not much of threat to push pocket. Needs to get clear shot at quarterback to contribute on blitz. **Grade: 5.0**

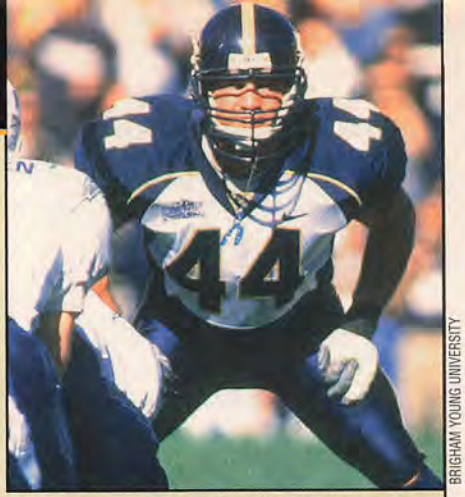
Key and diagnose: Excellent read-and-react player. Student of game. Studies opponents and understands tendencies. Wastes little motion and takes few false steps out of stance. **Grade: 6.0**

Pursuit/tackling: If he doesn't get caught up, is special pursuit player with great speed and reaction. Takes good angles and makes a lot of plays on move. Technically sound as tackler and shows good explosion into ballcarrier. **Grade: 5.5**

Notable: Hometown of Smith Center, Kan., is less than 15 miles from geographical center of contiguous United States.

Final analysis: Size and skills make him more an outside linebacker prospect but offers enough power and activity to compete inside at NFL level. Teams may balk on him early because of size limitations, but don't expect him to hang around into third round. Is too gifted an athlete and a proven playmaker. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.0**

SPOTLIGHT
ROB MORRIS


BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

Brigham Young is the institution listed next to Rob Morris' name on NFL draft boards. It should be Old School.

Morris is a throwback who should be thrown back so far that he never would have to play on artificial turf, let alone in a dome. The only football we should see Morris playing is on NFL Films, a show he was reared on. Growing up, Morris had two dogs—Butkus and Bronko. *Are you old school?* the commercials ask. Rob Morris knows his answer.

"I play the game the way it was supposed to be played—hard-nosed and tough," Morris says. "You have to have something bleeding, and you have to have something dirty, or you aren't playing football. Old-school guys never took a down off; I pride myself in never taking a down off."

At BYU, Morris was a dominating linebacker known as the "Freight Train" for his runaway, smashing style. He is regarded as the best middle linebacker in the draft.

But to neatly categorize Morris as a slobbering football maniac or to expect him to say "boom!" or to grunt in a conversation is to miss the dichotomy that is him.

"Some people think I'm off biting the heads off chickens when I'm not playing," Morris says. "But I am a person with strong religious beliefs, and I respect the beliefs of others. I think I'm intelligent. I like helping people. Hopefully, those kinds of things will stick out about me, too."

At BYU, Morris was known for his philanthropic ways. He's an Eagle Scout. He spent two years on a Mormon mission in Toronto (throw in a redshirt year, and Morris is a ripe 25). And those chickens he supposedly bites the heads off?

"I do make a great lemon and pepper chicken," Morris says. "As a gift, I got one of those George Foreman cookers. It's a fat-reducing machine. That thing's all-time."

Not something you would have expected Sam Huff to say when he played, but Morris nicely blends old school and new age. A player who has a mean streak on the field and has high character off it is a precious commodity.

Morris even will adapt if he is drafted by a dome team. After all, Chris Spielman, one of Morris' role models, survived the Pontiac Silverdome for eight years when he played for the Lions.

"I will just get some mud from outside," Morris says, "and put it on me before I go play." —*Kyle Veltrop*

5 Peter Sirmon, Oregon
6-2 242 4.81
3rd round

NFL comparison: Andy Katzenmoyer, Patriots

Natural, playmaker with excellent athletic ability and body control. Not overly gifted with size but plays with enough power and leverage to match up in middle. May struggle some vs. bigger blockers but shows enough hand and feet technique to shed and make plays on move. Physical tackler with good explosion. Has a lot of skills in open field as chase player. Upfield burst and quickness give him chance as inside pass rusher, but he is more competent in coverage. Projects as someone who can play all three downs because of natural drop skills and feel for passing game. **Notable:** Because of injury, struck up friendship with a team physician's daughter, whom he married last summer. **OVERALL GRADE: 26.0**

6 Matt Beck, California
6-3⅜ 238 4.65
3rd round

NFL comparison: Stephen Boyd, Lions

Better all-around athlete than most realize. Can take on blockers and makes a lot of plays between tackles with good leverage and explosion. Takes excellent pursuit angles and is natural sideline-to-sideline playmaker with great pure speed for position. Does not show impressive strength; more explosive than anything. Will not overpower anyone but will make lot of plays because of ability to use hands to shed. Projects as player who will come out on third downs because of poor drops into coverage and lack of flair as pass rusher. Hard worker with great motor. Will make it at next level because he'll work on weaknesses and improve overall game. **Notable:** Made 48 career tackles behind the line of scrimmage. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.0**

7 Jeff Ulbrich, Hawaii
6-0 249 4.60
3rd round

NFL comparison: Marvcus Patton, Chiefs

Short, squatty player with good leverage vs. run and excellent natural athletic ability. Shows a lot of flash. Outstanding footwork; plays with a lot of lateral movement. Has upfield burst and ability to get to quarterback as pass rusher. Needs to improve recognition skills; has some trouble making reads. When he locates ball, has excellent speed

and quickness in flow. Active player who will get to flats and close off lanes to outside. Physical tackler who plays with good leverage. Biggest obstacle is taking on isolation blocks in running game. Easily engulfed by bigger defenders if he does not have time to see block coming and avoid contact. **Notable:** Married to a former Hawaiian Tropics model. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

8 T.J. Slaughter, Southern Mississippi
6-0½ 234 4.85
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Al Wilson, Broncos

Playmaker with adequate size and speed. Feel for game makes up for limited skills. May have some trouble matching up with NFL linemen. Intense and aggressive, with excellent instincts and nose for ball. Shows lot of upfield ability from inside. Shoots gap hard and can push pocket as pass rusher. Tough but needs to avoid lot of contact to make plays. Doesn't have lot of coverage skills and is a bit awkward in space. Will have to improve strength and base to make impact on inside at next level. **Notable:** In spare time, models men's clothing.
OVERALL GRADE: 23.0

9 Dustin Lyman, Wake Forest
6-4¼ 244 4.75
4th round

NFL comparison: Winfred Tubbs, 49ers

Ideal measurables for inside player. Has had some knee problems past two seasons—a concern for fringe player. Quicker than he is fast. Has strength and size to match up in middle. Needs to play with better leverage to take on blockers. Has tendency to stop moving feet when he gets reached at second level. Biggest asset is ability to locate ball and flow. Makes a lot of plays outside of tackles and is good tackler in open field. Does not project as third-down player; offers little as pass rusher and shows some awkwardness in coverage. **Notable:** Something of a free spirit, likes to throw the dog and his camping gear into truck and drive into the mountains. **OVERALL GRADE:21.5**

10 Lester Towns, Washington
6-1¼ 252 4.98
4th round

NFL comparison: Kurt Gouveia, free agent

Bothered by foot injury entire senior season but is fully recovered and healthy to play. Has great first step and shows good reaction skills. Plays faster than 40 time would indicate; covers a lot of ground and shows good burst to ball. Has great natural strength and will match up well between tackles in NFL. Has lot of upfield burst and fills gap aggressively. Not huge threat as pass rusher but shows ability to push pocket when blitzing. Gets depth on pass drops and covers tight end well. Looked a bit tentative last year. When healthy, is aggressive. Can play every down. **Notable:** Had 12 screws and two plates removed from left foot before season; had dropped 45-pound weight plate on it.
OVERALL GRADE: 21.0

11 Keith Kelsey, Florida
6-0 250 4.75
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Hardy Nickerson, Jaguars

Bit of a mystery. Has tremendous physical skills, but production has been inconsistent. Much more athletic than most realize. Has excellent feet and quickness and size to match up in middle. A bit short but plays with good leverage and has a lot of natural strength. Mobile enough to be sideline-to-sideline player but takes too many plays off and is inconsistent over course of games. Body is somewhat soft but shows explosive strength and does good job shedding blocks with powerful hands and quick feet. If dedicated, could be productive NFL player. **Notable:** Was backup first three seasons behind Johnny Rutledge, Jevon Kearse and Mike Peterson. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

12 Danny Clark, Illinois
6-2¼ 236 4.75
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Ted Johnson, Patriots

Better athlete than player. Shows a lot of potential because of quickness and strength, but size a concern. Tough player who flys around field, but skills are limited. Seems more comfortable in short area, where he plays with lot of base and explosion. Is undersized and will have trouble against NFL linemen. Sure, breakdown tackler who shows ability to adjust in open field. Intensity and leadership are impressive. Will raise level of play on defense because of approach to game. **Notable:** A theater minor, had starring role in two student plays.
OVERALL GRADE: 20.5

13 Dwan Epps, Texas Southern
6-1⅛ 243 4.88
5th round

NFL comparison: Dwayne Gordon, Jets

Small-school talent grades out high because of production. Could be overrated but shows lot of natural playmaking skills. Has ability to stuff run and is extremely physical inside. The concern is his potential to take on bigger, more physical linemen without being engulfed at point of attack. More of a first- and second-down player; offers little as pass rusher or in coverage. Not an agile athlete; has some trouble with body control. Toughness against run excites NFL coaches and scouts. **Notable:** Won a Sega football championship over Christmas and will compete in a national tournament in Hawaii.
OVERALL GRADE:19.5

14 Frank Chamberlin, Boston College
6-0⅝ 245 4.80
6th round

NFL comparison: Jeff Brady, free agent

Extremely productive with explosive playmaking skills. Played all over field in college and benefited from great front line that allowed him to move freely. Has good lateral movement and instincts to get over traffic. Undersized and does not match up well between tackles. Will struggle vs. NFL's bigger, more physical linemen when he is reached. Projects as first- and second-down player because of lack of production as pass rusher and in coverage. Toughness and reaction skills will give him chance to contribute. Must overcome size limitations by adding strength and improving pursuit angles. **Notable:** Quiet by nature, but gave moving acceptance speech when presented BC's top football award and dedicated it to his mother.
OVERALL GRADE: 19.0

15 Jonathan Jackson, Oregon St.
6-2 239 4.83
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: John Holecek, Bills

Aggressive but will have problems matching up with NFL linemen. Plays at high intensity level but not a very natural athlete. Locates ball well and takes few false steps. Rigid in coverage. Doesn't show natural strength to take on isolation blocks between tackles. Needs to be kept clean of blockers to be productive; must improve footwork and hands to shed. Likely will make roster as reserve inside linebacker and special teams demon. **Notable:** In four college seasons, never missed a practice.
OVERALL GRADE: 18.5

16 Willie Fells, Purdue
5-11⅝ 225 4.85
7th round or free agent

NFL comparison: London Fletcher, Rams

Tough, instinctive player with limited skills. Has enough strength to compete, but size is serious concern at next level. Will struggle to match up between tackles, and production will be limited when he deals with bigger NFL linemen. Quick enough to make plays outside hash marks, but speed is just adequate. Has some trouble making plays in space. Productive overachiever. Coverage skills are suspect. Makes a lot of plays on instinct and toughness, but lack of overall skills will keep him from developing into consistent contributor at pro level. **Notable:** Had 99-2 record as high school and AAU wrestler. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

17 Scott Zimmerman, N. Colorado
5-11⅞ 229 4.75
7th round or free agent

NFL comparison: Derek Smith, Redskins

Doesn't have great measurables but plays with great toughness and instincts. Size is major obstacle; will struggle to match up as run-stuffer between tackles. Active vs. run and makes lot of plays because of ability to shed blocks and great pursuit angles. Will chase down plays from backside. Only competent in coverage. Shows some flair as pass rusher because of explosion and quickness. Will have to contribute heavily on special teams to make NFL roster. **Notable:** Served for a year in prestigious role of "Wrangler," promoting the annual Greeley (Colo.) Independent Stampede.
OVERALL GRADE: 16.0

Others: Isaiah Kacyvenski, Harvard, 6-1⅛, 236, 4.84; Jason Lamar, Toledo, 5-11, 230, 4.80; Keith Miller, California, 6-1, 238, 4.85; Kelvin Moses, Wake Forest, 6-0¼, 221, 4.51; Andre' O'Neal, Marshall, 6-1⅝, 232, 4.72; Jake Michel, Northwestern State, 6-1⅜, 246, 4.85; Ronnie Nicks, Notre Dame, 6-0¼, 240, 4.74

TSN Player Ratings

Outside Linebackers

OVERRATED
Corey Moore, Virginia Tech
Lack of size will limit his NFL production. May be limited to special teams, at least initially.

UNDERRATED
Keith Bulluck, Syracuse
Forced to move inside in college, which limited his exposure as a playmaker. Great athlete who knows how to play.

SLEEPER
Dhani Jones, Michigan
An intelligent natural playmaker who will contribute in a lot of ways. Has a good feel for the game.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Brian Urlacher, New Mexico
A tremendous all-around athlete with the size to dominate in all facets of the game. Could be an extraordinary player.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Na'il Diggs, Ohio State
TV broadcasters love him more than pro scouts do. Never lived up to his billing as a blue-chip college linebacker.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-2½	240	4.70	NFL Minimum	6-1	230	4.85

In 4-3 defenses, outside linebackers must be good athletes who can play in space. They have considerable cover responsibilities, needing the ability to drop into zones and to cover running backs out of the backfield. They must have good hips and flexibility and the speed and range to chase down plays. Most do not spend a lot of time rushing the quarterback—if they have that skill, it's a bonus. They also must be solid open-field tacklers and have the ability to shed blocks and flow to the play. There are few outside linebackers in the NFL who can do it all, but Jacksonville's Kevin Hardy is one. He plays in a scheme that allows him to blitz and rush the quarterback, so he has a lot of sack opportunities. Finding an outside linebacker who can do it all isn't easy; that's why big-time outside 'backers get big-time salaries. In the 3-4 defense, the outside linebackers are the team's primary pass rushers. They have very little pass cover responsibility and usually are "upfield" guys who can beat offensive linemen with their quickness. Although the colleges seem to be producing an abundance of undersized pass rushers who fit the 3-4 perfectly, most NFL defensive coordinators are sticking with the 4-3 and simply plugging these guys in as undersized pass rushers and blitzers out of their base package. Jacksonville is the perfect example of a 4-3 defense that blitzes a lot and has many similarities to a 3-4 defense.

This is perhaps the most intriguing and talented group of the draft with a core of special players at the top followed by 'tweeners who will move from defensive end to third-down specialists at outside linebacker. LaVar Arrington (Penn State) is the highest rated of the group and likely will go in the top three picks, but the biggest story is Brian Urlacher, a freakish-type athlete who played rover at New Mexico. Raynoch Thompson (Tennessee) and Keith Bulluck (Syracuse) are possible first rounders because of their athleticism and upside potential.

Corey Moore (Virginia Tech) and Clark Haggans (Colorado State) are interesting players because they will attempt to move from end. Another player to keep an eye on is Michigan State's Julian Peterson, who also will move from end to outside linebacker. A stellar Orange Bowl performance combined with impressive workouts have scouts and coaches talking about Peterson's potential.

***Denotes underclassman.**

CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

ON THE MOVE: *Moore's lack of size will keep him from playing defensive end in the NFL.*

1 LaVar Arrington, Penn State *
6-2 235 4.50 (40 time)
1st round

NFL comparison: Peter Boulware, Ravens
Vs. inside run: Strength to match up inside and take on blockers. Enough hand use and recognition to make plays down line as well as to hold ground vs. tackles and tight ends. More potential than production at this point. Needs to do better job shedding at point of attack. Tends to get too far upfield to make plays vs. inside run. **Grade: 6.0**
Vs. outside run: Outstanding. Burst upfield and range to make plays all over field. Tremendous athlete. Makes plays in pursuit. Rarely misses tackles in open field. **Grade: 7.0**
Blitz/coverage: Excellent upfield acceleration. Burst and quickness off line are outstanding. Strong enough to take on blockers and push pocket. Good recognition of pass and excellent feel for finding open crease. Enough athletic ability to cover. **Grade: 7.5**
Key and diagnose: Makes plays on instincts but tends to run himself out of plays. Gets too far upfield but continues to improve and shows ability to play run and pass. **Grade: 6.0**
Pursuit/tackling: Tremendous range. Takes good pursuit angles and can chase sideline-to-sideline. Sure tackler with great explosion into ballcarrier. **Grade: 7.0**
Notable: Won Butkus Award as nation's top linebacker.
Final analysis: Production in college wasn't as high as most expected but is best athlete for size in class. **OVERALL GRADE: 33.5**

2 Brian Urlacher, New Mexico
6-3⅜ 249 4.65
1st round

NFL comparison: Kevin Hardy, Jaguars
Vs. inside run: Strength and ability to take on blockers. Tough, physical player with size to compete inside. Needs work shedding blockers at point of attack. **Grade: 6.0**
Vs. outside run: Playmaker with range and strength. Covers lots of ground and shows speed to chase from backside. Needs to take better pursuit angles and struggles getting through traffic. Needs some technical work. **Grade: 6.5**
Blitz/coverage: Not a natural but has great burst off line and shows strength in pass rush. Inexperience is concern. More of roaming safety in college but has tools and can develop into dominating pass rusher with coaching. Athletic enough to cover; shows feel in space. **Grade: 6.0**
Key and diagnose: Space player with instincts. Excellent at finding ball and attacking. Takes few false steps. Potential as flow-type playmaker. **Grade: 6.5**
Pursuit/tackling: Good speed and lateral movement. Makes plays on move and body control is outstanding. Sound tackler who knows how to lower shoulder to deliver blow. **Grade: 6.0**
Notable: 5-9, 160-pound receiver as high school sophomore.
Final analysis: Size, speed and strength are special and should develop into dominating player. **OVERALL GRADE: 31.0**

3 Raynoch Thompson, Tennessee
6-2 220 4.60
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Derrick Brooks, Buccaneers
Vs. inside run: Lateral movement is impressive and does good job working back to inside but lack of strength is concern. **Grade: 5.0**
Vs. outside run: Outstanding because of range and agility to make plays. Does good job using hands to shed and outstanding at getting through traffic. **Grade: 7.0**
Blitz/coverage: Talent to dominate as pass rusher. Good feel for gaps and does good job getting upfield. Change of direction and speed to improve in coverage but has trouble in man-to-man. **Grade: 5.5**
Key and diagnose: Instinctive player who does great job recognizing difference between pass

and rush. Rarely takes false steps and does good job reacting to plays. **Grade: 5.5**
Pursuit/tackling: Top pursuing linebacker in draft with range and playmaking ability. Knows angles and rarely cut off in pursuit. Explosive tackler but has tendency to attack too high. **Grade: 6.5**
Notable: Didn't play as freshman because of academic problems.
Final analysis: Team could tab him in first round for playmaking ability knowing he will improve strength, coverage skills.
OVERALL GRADE: 29.5

4 Keith Bulluck, Syracuse
6-2⅞ 232 4.56
2nd round

NFL comparison: Bill Romanowski, Broncos
Vs. inside run: Gets engulfed and doesn't match up because of average size and strength. Good quickness and lateral movement. **Grade: 5.0**
Vs. outside run: Special athlete with range and upfield burst. Makes plays in backfield, showing instincts and playmaking skills. Trouble when teams run at him but he'll beat most tackles to corner. **Grade: 6.5**
Blitz/coverage: Quality edge rush skills and enough speed and burst to win battle to corner. Shows moves in pursuit but isn't experienced pass rusher, especially when taking on blockers. Makes plays with athletic ability. Fluid in coverage and quick in drops. Can cover tight end and shows skills to match up with backs. **Grade: 7.0**
Key and diagnose: Read-and-react player with nose for ball. Takes few false steps, understands reads out of stance. Intelligent, coachable and understands tendencies. **Grade: 6.0**
Pursuit/tackling: Tends to get cut off in traffic and takes poor angles in pursuit. Exciting tackler with burst into ballcarrier but misses on occasion in open field and fails to get position consistently. **Grade: 5.0**
Notable: Started Syracuse career as safety.
Final analysis: Forced to play inside as senior but is intriguing because of tremendous athleticism and playmaking potential.
OVERALL GRADE: 29.0

5 Na'il Diggs, Ohio State *
6-3 235 4.60
2nd round

NFL comparison: Chris Slade, Patriots
Vs. inside run: All-around athlete with quick feet and lateral movement to get back inside. Gets in position but needs work on taking on block. Physical and strong but lacks bulk. **Grade: 5.0**
Vs. outside run: Fluid athlete with range, upfield skills. Has tools and shows feel for run game but is poor tackler. **Grade: 6.5**
Blitz/coverage: Gets depth on pass drops and shows skills in coverage. Light on feet and good feel in man-to-man situations. Upfield skills and projects as dominant pass rusher. Uses hands well to shed and has impressive moves in pursuit. **Grade: 6.5**
Key and diagnose: Understands position but tends to take false steps. Makes reads and does good job locating ball but overzealous and runs out of position. **Grade: 5.0**
Pursuit/tackling: Shows range to track down faster ballcarriers. Quick enough to make plays in flats and excellent chasing from backside. Explosive tackler but tends to get in poor position. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Spent first two years at Ohio State on defensive line.
Final analysis: Has tools and skills to develop into a playmaker. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

6 Julian Peterson, Michigan State
6-5⅜ 233 4.76
2nd round

NFL comparison: Bryce Paup, Jaguars
Vs. inside run: Aggressive with lateral movement to get back inside. Lacks strength or bulk to match up inside and doesn't figure to spend much time there. **Grade: 5.0**
Vs. outside run: Upfield skills and ability to make plays in backfield. Wins battle to corner and dominates most matchups off edge but lacks feel for run game and often runs out of position. Struggles when reached because of size. **Grade: 6.0**
Blitz/coverage: Relies on burst and quickness off edge. Won't overpower but shows hand use and moves to win one-on-one battles. Athletic ability to drop in coverage but is mostly upfield player with limited experience and feel in coverage. **Grade: 6.5**
Key and diagnose: Makes good reads and has body control, change of direction but takes false steps and runs out of plays because he gets too far upfield. **Grade: 5.0**
Pursuit/tackling: High-effort guy who will chase. Good range and speed to chase from backside. Makes big plays as tackler but technically not impressive. Attacks too high and not great finisher. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Once a junior college All-American.
Final analysis: Stock has risen since dominating performance in Orange Bowl. Ideal size, speed and strength to make difference. Upfield burst and playmaking skills excite coaches. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.0**

7 Sekou Sanyika, California
6-3⅝ 237 4.75
3rd round

NFL comparison: Junior Seau, Chargers
Relies on athleticism and quickness off edge. Lacks size to match up inside but shows lateral movement and ability to chase sideline to sideline. Makes plays on passing downs because of pass rush and burst off edge. Needs to improve when locked on and still has problems getting back inside. Quickness and agility give him chance in coverage but lacks feel for man-to-man situations. **Notable:** Cal's all-time leader in tackles for loss.
OVERALL GRADE: 27.0

8 Corey Moore, Virginia Tech
5-11 213 4.43
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Dexter Coakley, Cowboys
Dominating edge rusher at end in college but is 'tweener who needs to switch positions. Undersized and lacks potential as run stuffer but is playmaker with burst and upfield ability. Pursuit-type player who makes plays in open field. Projects as pass-rush specialist. **Notable:** Won Bronko Nagurski Award as nation's top defender.
OVERALL GRADE: 25.5

9 Erik Flowers, Arizona State
6-3 245 4.80
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: John Thierry, Packers
Stock rising because of athleticism and ability to make plays. Good speed and quickness. Lineman in college who must move to linebacker due to lack of size; may get engulfed by big linemen. Agility and footwork to cover but lacks experience. Pass-rush skills are impressive, shows great burst off line and knows how to dip shoulder when coming off edge. Should make transition as situational pass rusher. **Notable:** Began career at junior college. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

10 Antonio Wilson, Texas A&M-Commerce
6-1¾ 229 4.74
4th round

NFL comparison: Anthony Pleasant, free agent
Tough, physical player with tackling skills and impressive strength. Not dominant as run defender but gets good position. Makes plays on move. Must improve bulk or will struggle at point of attack. Good burst and quickness as pass rusher. Upside as pass rusher and should improve with coaching as far as angles are concerned. Inexperienced in coverage but fluid athlete with skills to handle man-to-man situations. **Notable:** Part of A&M defense that allowed just 300 yards per game in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

11 Ali Abdul Azziz, UCLA
6-2 230 4.70
4th round

NFL comparison: Sam Rogers, Bills
Raw talent who missed significant time as senior because of injury. Natural burst and explosion off the edge. Undersized and has trouble vs. run. Upfield playmaker shows speed and quickness to beat linemen to corner. Situational player who will contribute on passing downs and special teams. **Notable:** Played running back and safety first two years at UCLA. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.0**

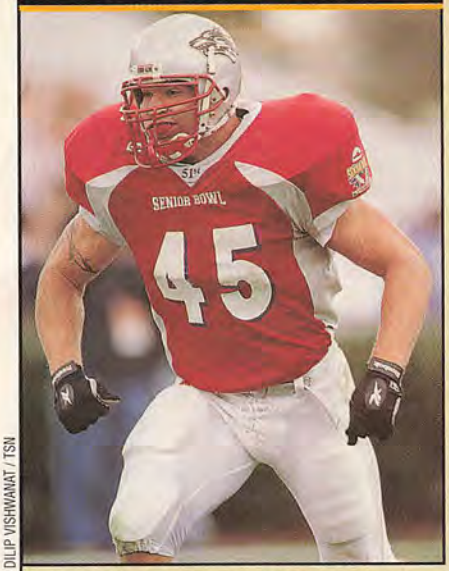
12 DaShon Polk, Arizona
6-2 230 4.70
4th round

NFL comparison: Joe Bowden, Titans
Undersized but shows above-average speed and athletic ability. Good in coverage and vs. run. Read-and-react player with little wasted motion. Gets to flat quickly and reacts well to receivers' cuts. Not dominant pass rusher but shows burst off corner. Shedding blocks is problem. **Notable:** Came to Arizona as a defensive back. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.0**

13 Julius Jackson, Nebraska
6-0¼ 241 4.75
5th round

NFL comparison: Kory Minor, Panthers
Versatile with athletic ability and feel for game. Does excellent job making plays in space. Has range but gets in trouble when linemen reach him. Good strength but lacks size to hold up. Impressive skills as playmaker vs. run but lack of size may cause trouble. Candidate to be backup outside linebacker and special-teams performer. **Notable:** First modern Husker to score two defensive TDs in one game. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.5**

SPOTLIGHT
BRIAN URLACHER



DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

Brian Urlacher played safety most of his career at New Mexico, including last season, when he made 154 tackles. But his combination of size, strength and speed have NFL teams coveting him as one of this draft's top outside linebackers, right behind Penn State's LaVar Arrington.

That's fine with Urlacher, who once was a 5-9 prep prospect before he grew about seven inches by the end of his senior season in high school. At New Mexico, he played linebacker as a sophomore and played the position again at the Senior Bowl—where he earned defensive MVP honors for the South team.

"I'm so much more confident now playing linebacker," Urlacher told the *Albuquerque Tribune* after a week of impressing scouts in Mobile, Ala. "I feel like I solidified I can play linebacker (in the NFL)."

NFL scouts love his versatility. He can go into rover mode or create chaos as part of the front seven, which is a rare talent. Where exactly Urlacher fits best in the NFL could depend on where the team that drafts him needs him most. Vikings vice president of player personnel Frank Gilliam says he thinks Urlacher "will play closer to the line rather than back deep as a secondary-type defender." Cowboys scouts cite Urlacher's "unusual versatility" and say Dallas has put a lot of slashes down for his position, from defensive back to middle linebacker.

Lobos coach Rocky Long likens Urlacher to players he once coached with a similar knack. "Reggie Tongue (Oregon State) was taken in the second round and (UCLA's) Shaun Williams was a first-round draft pick," he says. "Brian compares favorably to both of those guys. He's bigger and faster than both of them. They may have been a little better in pass coverage, but he's a better tackler and at providing run support."

The consensus is that if you get Urlacher on the field anywhere, he could blossom into a superstar. —*Vinnie Iyer*

14 **Tramont Lawless, Memphis**
6-2½ 255 5.03
5th round
NFL comparison: Henri Crockett, Falcons
Big, physical player with size, strength and bulk to hold up. Better run defender than pass rusher. Adequate quickness and burst to compete but more competent taking on blocks and working to inside of run game. Lacks pursuit speed. **Notable:** Helped Memphis' defense rank 23rd in nation. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

15 **Fred Jones, Colorado**
6-2⅛ 242 4.85
5th round
NFL comparison: Lonnie Marts, Jaguars
Projected as inside linebacker because of size. Just adequate athlete and offers little as pass rusher. Makes plays because of ability to stack up at point of attack, especially on outside. Uses hands well to shed and does good job picking up ballcarrier. Takes adequate pursuit angles, but has tendency to get feet crossed and get caught in traffic. **Notable:** Didn't play as sophomore due to injury and suspension. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

16 **Ian Gold, Michigan**
6-0½ 220 4.55
5th or 6th round,
NFL comparison: Shawn Barber, Redskins
'Tweener with speed and athletic ability to play outside linebacker but size is more conducive for safety, where he has limited exposure in coverage. Tough guy who plays aggressively. Instincts and recognition skills give him chance but needs to offer more as pass rusher. Will play special teams and could back up at weakside linebacker. **Notable:** Twin brothers played football at Central Michigan. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

17 **Cedric Pittman, Nevada**
6-3⅛ 248 4.68
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: John Mobley, Broncos
Potential as run stuffer off edge. Lacks strength but does good job shedding blocks and plays with high motor. Footwork a concern. Enough speed and burst to contribute but raw as pass rusher and lacks moves to get free. Athletic in coverage and shows ability to play man to man. Tends to get out of position and ignore responsibility. **Notable:** Is deacon in his church and works with children. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

18 **Dhani Jones, Michigan**
6-1¼ 235 4.70
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Jamie Sharper, Ravens
Undersized but gets by on quickness and athleticism. Makes plays in open field because of angles and ability to get through traffic. Good feel and agile enough to match up in man-to-man coverage. Not explosive off line as pass rusher. **Notable:** Helped Michigan limit foes to 115 yards rushing per game in 1999. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

19 **Dustin Cohen, Miami (Ohio)**
6-3⅜ 236 4.83
6th round
NFL comparison: Mike Peterson, Colts
Size to match up at point of attack. Enough speed to develop into chase-type player. College scheme inflated numbers. Adequate speed, good body control. Tends to overextend and take poor pursuit angles. Lacks explosion to make impact as pass rusher. **Notable:** Had over 120 tackles each of last three seasons. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

20 **Tim Smith, Stanford**
6-3½ 229 4.78
6th or 7th round
NFL comparison: Gerald Dixon, free agent
Has adequate size and average speed. Playmaker with instincts. Good burst off line and quickness to contribute as pass rusher. Avoids contact and gets through traffic. Feet are solid and shows potential in coverage. With coaching and bulk could emerge as reserve/special-teams player. **Notable:** Played safety at Stanford. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.5**

21 **Jack Golden, Oklahoma State**
6-1⅞ 225 4.80
6th or 7th round
NFL comparison: Lee Woodall, free agent
Undersized with above-average movement. Aggressive with good reaction and upfield burst. Trouble when run at and tends to play too tentatively. **Notable:** Also played tight end at Oklahoma State. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

22 **Chris Edwards, Georgia Tech**
6-5 223 4.65
7th round
NFL comparison: Quentin Coryatt, free agent
Flies around field and makes plays in pursuit. Gets engulfed at point of attack but frame has room to grow. Enough upside because of speed and frame to be late-round steal. **Notable:** Cousin of former Georgia RB Robert Edwards. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

23 **Corey Atkins, South Carolina**
6-0¼ 227 4.55
7th round
NFL comparison: Roman Phifer, Jets
Tough player with excellent strength, outstanding speed. Leverage as tackler and ability to take on blocks impressive. Size limits could be problem but does good job fighting through blocks. **Notable:** Played inside linebacker as senior. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

Others: Vernon Banks, Syracuse, 6-2⅞, 213, 4.68; Zach Falconer, Northwestern, 6-0¼ 222, 4.70; Wayne Hampton, Rutgers, 6-3¼, 238, 4.75; Deon Hunt, Hampton, 5-11½ 233, 4.60; Paris Lenon, Richmond, 6-1, 222, 4.75; Mac Morrison, Penn State, 6-1, 236, 4.75; Sam Sherrod, San Jose State, 6-4, 251, 4.68; Rodney Smith, Baylor, 6-0, 225, 4.80; Shannon Taylor, Virginia, 6-3, 247, 4.60.

TSN Player Ratings

Cornerbacks

OVERRATED
Ahmed Plummer, Ohio State
Could slip to the third CB taken because he shows little potential to improve. Not in same class as Shawn Springs.

UNDERRATED
Kareem Larrimore, West Texas A&M
Shows the natural cover ability and range to overcome his size limitations. Likes to take chances in coverage.

SLEEPER
David Macklin, Penn State
Pure cover corner who defied size questions and succeeded in a big-time college program. Intelligent and instinctive.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Rashard Anderson, Jackson State
Could sneak into the first round due to his size and potential to shut down the NFL's bigger receivers. Intriguing prospect.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Mario Edwards, Florida State
Inconsistent senior season has a lot of teams worried about his mental approach to the game.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	5-10½	190	4.50
NFL Minimum	5-8	170	4.60

This has become an increasingly tough position to fill because of the increasing number of big wide receivers in the NFL. All corners must have speed, but it is just as important that he have the ability to backpedal and turn in pass coverage situations. Many cornerbacks with great speed lose a lot of time in transition as they turn to run with the receiver; that's how the receiver separates. The corner must have great hips and flexibility and also show a quick burst and explosion to the ball. A good corner also knows how to read routes, read the quarterback and get a great jump on the ball. He must be somewhat physical and at least adequate at tackling. But if forced to make a choice, cover skills always will be more important to NFL coaches than tackling ability. If you can get both in the same player, great. Size is becoming more of a factor, especially in the red zone, because big receivers like Minnesota's Randy Moss can take advantage of a short corner. Guys like Seattle's Shawn Springs, Oakland's Charles Woodson and Baltimore's Chris McAlister are examples of big, athletic corners who can match up with the top wide receivers in the game. Another important quality for a corner is confidence. No matter how good he is, he will be beaten occasionally. There have been many good cornerbacks who never played up to their potential in the NFL because they spent too much time worrying about the last play.

In today's NFL, cornerback arguably is the most important position on the field, so teams are more likely to reach for a lesser talent because of need in the first round. The shift to bigger wide receivers combined with offenses using more four- and five-receiver sets has defensive coaches frantically searching for more talent at cornerback to withstand the trend.

Although the depth is appealing, this class lacks the franchise-type cornerbacks of the last few drafts. Ahmed Plummer and Dwayne Goodrich have shown the most, but Rashard Anderson is the darling of the group. Anderson may not be as polished and his level of competition is a concern, but his natural size and skill have sparked tremendous interest.

*Denotes underclassman.

1 Ahmed Plummer, Ohio State
5-11 190 4.49 (40 time)
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Dale Carter, Broncos
Coverage skills: Has the hips and footwork. Solid overall coverage skills and outstanding athleticism. Should improve tremendously with experience. Shows awareness and good feel in zone coverage, but is better man-to-man player. Size is average, but is strong enough to survive in press coverage. **Grade: 7.0**
Key and diagnose: Struggles some in this area. Anticipation not where it needs to be. Will gamble some, but does not have good feel for when to jump a route or when to sit back. **Grade: 6.0**
Closing quickness: Has adequate burst to ball. Does great job recovering because of body control. Is more quick than fast, but has enough closing speed to take risks in coverage. **Grade: 6.5**
Ball skills: Hands are outstanding, but needs to play ball better. Has excellent leaping ability and will make acrobatic catch, but timing sometimes is off. **Grade: 6.0**
Run support: Not very strong—more of a drag-down tackler—but a natural athlete who seems willing in run support. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Won prestigious National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame Scholarship.
Final analysis: Despite top ranking, may not be first corner taken; Rashard Anderson has better measurables and upside. Holding up against high level of college competition is most impressive feat. The safe pick in Round 1. **OVERALL GRADE: 31.0**

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

OOPS: *Florida State won the national title last year, but Edwards did not have a great season.*

2 Dwayne Goodrich, Tennessee
5-11 185 4.50
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Aaron Glenn, Jets
Coverage skills: Has speed, burst, hips and strength in single-man coverage. Outstanding press skills at line and enough recovery speed to take chances on short routes. Man-to-man coverage skills are better, but has enough quickness to compete in zone coverage. Best attributes are confidence and ability to bounce back after giving up big play. **Grade: 7.0**
Key and diagnose: Instinctive player who shows mental capacity to decipher between run and pass. Makes many plays on intuition alone. **Grade: 6.5**
Closing quickness: Outstanding field speed is faster than 40 time indicates. Quick enough to take chances in coverage and cover up when fooled. Has good feel for ball; takes good pursuit angles. **Grade: 6.5**
Ball skills: Excellent body control. Does good job playing ball in air; great at catching ball at highest point. Natural hands. Able to catch ball over shoulders. Fluid in coverage. **Grade: 7.0**
Run support: Not real aggressive. Has trouble tackling in open field. Overall, does not show requisite willingness in run support. **Grade: 4.0**
Notable: Track and field athlete; has career bests of 10.5 in 100 meters and 21.7 in 200 meters.
Final analysis: Like Plummer, is polished cover corner who would project as safe first-round pick, but could slip to second round because of small upside and average measurables. **OVERALL GRADE: 31.0**

3 Rashard Anderson, Jackson State
6-2½ 204 4.43
1st or 2nd round

NFL comparison: Bobby Taylor, Eagles
Coverage skills: Big and fast enough to match up with bigger and faster receivers. Quick feet. Is fluid enough in hips. Biggest problem is lack of experience vs. top receivers. Showed many skills at Senior Bowl in man-to-man coverage, but had tendency to get turned around by crisp double moves. **Grade: 6.5**
Key and diagnose: Needs to work on recognition at NFL level. Much more effective in single-man coverage. Has some trouble pick-

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

ing up run and shows some deficiencies in zone coverage. **Grade: 5.5**

Closing quickness: Has great natural speed and good acceleration when ball is in air. Does good job turning hips and changing direction. Good quickness jumping short routes. **Grade: 6.5**

Ball skills: Has natural hands and ability to snatch ball in air. Size allows him to compete vs. bigger receivers for jump balls. Tends to play too physically; makes too much contact when ball is in air. **Grade: 6.0**

Run support: Has size and strength to contribute, but is not aggressive enough and tends to allow blockers to get in body and ride him out of play. Solid wrap-up guy, but not very strong as tackler. **Grade: 4.5**

Notable: Son of former Jackson State and NFL running back Ricky Patton.

Final analysis: Most intriguing prospect because of size/speed combination. Could jump to head of class because of tremendous upside. Skills project him as second-round player, but could get snatched up late in first round because of size to match up vs. bigger, more physical receivers in man coverage. **OVERALL GRADE: 30.0**

4 Mario Edwards, Florida State
6-0⅛ 183 4.48
2nd round

NFL comparison: Aeneas Williams, Cardinals

Coverage skills: Quick and fluid enough to turn and run with anybody. A bit lanky, but uses wide wingspan to break up passes. Solid in press coverage; uses big frame to smother receivers off line. Fair in zone coverage. Has good awareness and burst, but loses receivers and gets out of position at times. **Grade: 6.5**

Key and diagnose: Reads and reacts well. Shows good instincts, but tends to take plays off and lose concentration. Has skills, but needs to play with more consistency. **Grade: 5.5**

Closing quickness: Has lot of range and ability to turn and run. Knows when to jump route and when to back off. Has average speed but good burst out of backpedal. Can run downfield with most receivers. **Grade: 6.0**

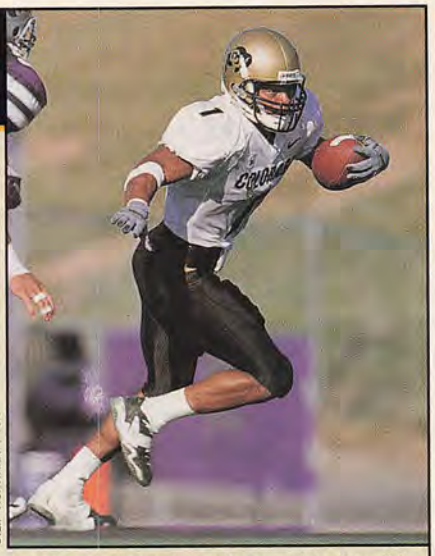
Ball skills: Natural with hands. Good at catching ball over shoulders. Will go up and meet ball at highest point, but digressed some in this area as senior. Gave up some big plays because of mistimed jumps. **Grade: 5.5**

Run support: Aggressive. Seems to read run well and attack ballcarrier. Not real physical as tackler—more a wrap-up guy—but is willing and will make tackle in open field. **Grade: 6.5**

Notable: Attended same high school (Pascagoula, Miss.) as former FSU All-American and current Dolphins cornerback Terrell Buckley.

Final analysis: Projected as top corner entering senior season, but gambled too much and gave up big plays. Scouts now question ability to play ball. Looks to be solid second-round pick because of natural athleticism and size. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

SPOTLIGHT
BEN KELLY



DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

When you ask Colorado cornerback Ben Kelly about his size, he doesn't lie.

"I'm closer to 5-9½, about 188 pounds," says Kelly, who's listed at 5-10, 190.

That's not the ideal size for an everyday NFL cornerback, but then, Pro Bowl corners like Darrell Green and Aaron Glenn and younger talents such as Ronde Barber, Dre' Bly and Terry Fair cover the NFL's bigger, more physical receivers one-on-one. Not one of those corners is taller than 5-10.

"I think he's a true corner," says one NFC scouting director. "His height is a concern, but there aren't a lot of 6-foot corners in the NFL. He's around the ball and a playmaker."

The questions about size are nothing new for Kelly.

"There have been questions about me and my size my whole career," he says. "I love it. I look forward to competing with the bigger receivers. I won't let them walk over me. I'll give them a fight."

Colorado coach Gary Barnett thinks Kelly is up to the challenge. "Potentially, I think he's a complete corner," Barnett says. "Ben's not a big corner, but he's not as small of a corner as people think. His anticipation and athletic ability will allow him to cover the bigger players. I think too much gets made of size sometimes. He's very strong, his athleticism is terrific, and I don't think it's any bigger issue for a guy like Ben to cover a more physical receiver than it is for a guy who's 6-1 or 6-2."

Matching up against Randy Moss, Herman Moore or Keyshawn Johnson is a lot to ask of any corner, no matter what size, but Kelly says he's ready.

"It's something you're not supposed to be able to do," he says, "and I love proving people wrong. I'm physical enough to play every down in (the) NFL next year."

Kelly also is an electrifying return specialist. In his three seasons at Colorado, Kelly returned four kickoffs and three punts for touchdowns. "That's my bonus," he says, "but one of the big things I want to accomplish is being known as a top-flight defensive back first, who also can return kicks." —*Mark Wetzel*

5 Deltha O'Neal, California
5-10 185 4.55
2nd round

NFL comparison: Donnie Abraham, Buccaneers

Coverage skills: Has enough speed to compete in vertical passing game. Is fluid enough in backpedal and can turn and stick with more explosive receivers. Tends to guess and come up empty-handed when he makes mistakes reading routes. **Grade: 6.0**

Key and diagnose: Not a great anticipator and makes few big plays. Tends to play passively because he does not read short routes as well as he should. **Grade: 5.0**

Closing quickness: Lacks great natural speed and will fall behind in coverage on deep ball. Plays softer coverage to make up for lack of speed and burst. Doesn't get beat often, but marginal closing quickness limits big-play potential. **Grade: 5.0**

Ball skills: Times jumps well, is aggressive and makes lot of plays in air despite size limitations. Has adequate hands; will snatch ball if opportunity arises. Outstanding concentration. **Grade: 6.0**

Run support: Loves to contribute vs. run. Aggressive player with good strength for size. Physical tackler; knows how to lower shoulder into ballcarrier. **Grade: 6.0**

Notable: Milpitas (Calif.) High's student body president in senior year.

Final analysis: Rates as No. 2 corner on many draft boards because of feel for passing game. But limited natural skills and inability to succeed in press coverage are concerns. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.0**

6 Lewis Sanders, Maryland *
6-0 200 4.45
2nd round

NFL comparison: Shawn Springs, Seahawks

Coverage skills: Excellent speed and ability to chase. Has size to match up with some bigger receivers. Quick in and out of backpedal. Has lot of natural skills, but tends to break too late into cuts and has only adequate instincts. **Grade: 6.5**

Key and diagnose: Can decipher between pass and run. Does fine job sticking with double moves and rarely takes false step. Does not make quick enough decisions when reading routes; must improve on jumping short routes. **Grade: 5.0**

Closing quickness: Has tremendous speed and great burst out of backpedal. Is technically sound in footwork; rarely gets turned around in coverage. Tough to go vertical on unless he bites on play fake or short route. **Grade: 6.5**

SPOTLIGHT
DELTHA O'NEAL, CAL

JOHN CORDES FOR TSN

Cal coach Tom Holmoe knew Deltha O'Neal had too much talent to be sitting the bench. So when O'Neal, who spent his first two years at Cal as a backup tailback, approached Holmoe about switching to cornerback in the spring of 1998, Holmoe didn't hesitate to make the move.

Even though O'Neal's first practice at corner didn't go as smoothly as Holmoe had hoped, O'Neal's coverage skills eventually took over. Now, after playing the position for only two years, O'Neal is projected as a late-second-round pick.

"He improved every game," says Holmoe, who was defensive backs coach with the 49ers for two years. "He's got more talent ahead of him. He can learn the position. That's one thing with corner, you can learn that forever."

O'Neal, who says the toughest adjustment to corner was "getting used to running backward instead of forward," settled in last season and used his timing and hands to grab nine interceptions, tops in the nation, and set an NCAA record by returning four for touchdowns. While that's impressive, scouts say O'Neal doesn't have great speed (4.55) and lacks closing quickness. But Holmoe, who coached four Pro Bowl defensive backs with the 49ers, says O'Neal more than makes up for his lack of blazing speed.

"Other than flat-out speed, he has all those tools to play in the NFL," he says. "I would almost wager there will be a number of corners that will be faster that will go before him. But they won't last as long. He's a smart player. He's great around the ball. He has great body control. He has super timing. Some guys have no clue. Some NFL guys are real fast but look like a fish out of water. But he's got all of those things."

If O'Neal's talent at corner isn't enough to entice NFL teams, his explosive returning ability should help boost his status. And O'Neal, who ranked fourth in the nation in kickoff returns last season (29.2 yards per return with one TD), ran a punt back for a score and led Cal in scoring (36 points) en route to earning Pac-10 Defensive Player of the Year honors, says he wouldn't mind doing double duty as a corner and return specialist.

"I would draft him as a return guy if he didn't play a down as a DB," says Holmoe. "At the very least, he could be a punt returner; second, he could be a nickel guy, and third, if he's fortunate to be a starting corner, you've got the gravy."—*Stacy Clardie*

Ball skills: Natural playmaker with good nose for ball. Times jumps well and gets good elevation. Has good hands and will snatch ball at highest point. **Grade: 6.0**
Run support: Has good size and strength, but needs to play more aggressively in run support. Plays a bit tentatively and does not lay lot of big hits on ballcarrier. **Grade: 4.5**
Notable: Tied for national lead in takeaways (six interceptions, three fumble recoveries) in '99 season.
Final analysis: Interesting prospect because of raw talent and athleticism. Still must work on technique and diagnosing skills, but could emerge in next couple of years.
OVERALL GRADE: 27.0

7 Ike Charlton, Virginia Tech *
6-0 200 4.50
2nd or 3rd round
NFL comparison: James Hasty, Chiefs
Tough, physical competitor with solid overall skills. Has speed and size to compete. Playmaker with good instincts and feel for passing game. Is strong enough to play press coverage, but technique could use refinement. Tends to get turned around in coverage and hips aren't as fluid as expected. May be better suited to play zone. With work on technique in man coverage, could be complete player. Competitiveness in run support and potential as special teams player adds to value. **Notable:** Finished fifth in 55-meter dash at Atlantic 10 Conference's indoor track and field championships in '97.
OVERALL GRADE: 26.5

8 Lloyd Harrison, North Carolina State
5-10⅞ 189 4.55
3rd round
NFL comparison: Eric Davis, Panthers
Playmaker with adequate man-to-man coverage skills and outstanding instincts. Better football player than athlete. Has competitive speed and good quickness, but generally gives big cushion to hide deficiencies in man coverage. Does good job sticking with receivers, but does not show a lot of press skills and is not real fluid athlete. Better in zone coverage because of feel for position and discipline as player. Shows burst out of backpedal and attacks short route. Average open-field tackler; plays tentatively in run support. **Notable:** Harrison and two former N.C. State players finished third out of 68 teams in a prestigious academic competition in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

9 Lamar Chapman, Kansas State
6-0 175 4.50
3rd or 4th round
NFL comparison: Rod Woodson, Ravens
Has excelled since making transition from free safety. Tall enough, but could use added bulk and strength to match up in press coverage. Has excellent feel for coverage and is better in zone than man coverage. Adequate hips and backpedal. Will improve with experience. Has outstanding burst out of backpedal and will lay hit on receivers over middle. Average speed. Has some trouble in deep third of field, but takes few false steps and always seems to be in position. Aggressive in run support, but doesn't do great job of chasing down play. **Notable:** Tied Big 12 record with 94-yard punt return for touchdown in '97. **OVERALL GRADE: 23.5**

10 Ben Kelly, Colorado *
5-10 190 4.38
4th or 5th round
NFL comparison: Darrien Gordon, Raiders
Smallish corner with exceptional speed and solid coverage skills. Blankets receivers in man coverage because of ability to recover. Extremely fluid athlete with excellent hips and explosion out of backpedal. Has tremendous body control and change of direction. Size limitations and marginal strength are concerns. Does not project as press-coverage corner, but has natural skills to play in soft, man-to-man situations. Doesn't offer much in run support because of size. Potential as big-play return man increases overall value. **Notable:** Earned All-American honors in track and field as member of Colorado's 4-by-400 meter relay team in '99.
OVERALL GRADE: 23.0

11 David Macklin, Penn State
5-9 197 4.50
4th or 5th round
NFL comparison: Tyronne Drakeford, Saints
Joe Paterno said Macklin is best natural cover corner he's ever coached, but many NFL scouts can't overlook size and speed limitations. Despite size, plays physically and gets in excellent position. Tremendous cover skills. Natural in movement and does great job reading and reacting. Makes lot of plays on instincts. Has fluid hips and is quick in and out of backpedal. May have trouble matching up vs. bigger receivers. Projects more as nickel corner with slot-coverage duties. Does not show great recovery speed, but ability to read routes and stay with receivers in deep third is impressive. **Notable:** As freshman high school basketball player, once guarded Allen Iverson and held him to 13 points. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.5**

12 Brian Gray, Brigham Young
6-1½ 219 4.55
4th or 5th round
NFL comparison: Corey Chavous, Cardinals
Moving up on many draft boards because of size and fluid movement. Speed is bit of concern. Size and strength allow him to play press coverage, but when he doesn't get jam on the line, recovery speed is inadequate. Decent awareness in zone coverage. Makes some good plays on ball and has size and strength to attack receiver after catch. Sometimes looks to be step behind with instincts. Will need time to develop. Some project him as safety, but he'll be good fit at corner if allowed to play in scheme that plays to his raw, natural ability. **Notable:** Spent last summer as volunteeer at Provo, Utah, Boys Club. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

13 Ralph Brown, Nebraska
5-9¾ 175 4.55
5th round
NFL comparison: Jimmy Hitchcock, Panthers
Started all four years at Nebraska. Lacks desirable size and speed to play on island, but defies measurables with natural playmaking skills. Has top-flight instincts and awareness in coverage. Rarely wastes motion; takes proper angles and reacts to ball. Shows enough cover skills to play against slot receiver. Will shock some with ability to match up with more physically gifted receivers. **Notable:** Graduated from Nebraska in just seven semesters. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

14 Hank Poteat, Pittsburgh
5-10 188 4.48
5th round
NFL comparison: Terrance Shaw, Chargers
Former running back. A bit on raw side, but natural athleticism and toughness offer significant upside. Because of limited experience at position, does not play lot of press coverage and tends to give too much cushion. Has great potential in man coverage because of speed and catch-up quickness. Smooth in hips and explodes out of backpedal. Takes few false steps and reads quarterback well. Tends to mistime jumps and get tangled up with receivers in air. **Notable:** After starting '97 season at tailback, was moved to the secondary on full-time basis. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

15 Kareem Larrimore, W. Tex. A&M
5-11⅛ 191 4.48
4th or 5th round
NFL comparison: Bryant Westbrook, Lions
Continues to rise on most draft boards because of quickness, speed and adequate size. Extremely fluid in turns. Shows lot of potential as cover corner because of natural athleticism and feel for passing game. Shows substantial range and does excellent job recovering. Not as physical as some would like, but is aggressive in coverage. Will make some big plays because he likes to gamble and has speed and quickness to do it without getting burned. Limited exposure vs. some of more athletic receivers. Could develop into solid contributor in nickel package. **Notable:** His 99-yard return in Blue-Gray Game was first kickoff return for touchdown in all-star game's history. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.5**

16 Michael Hawthorne, Purdue
6-2¾ 195 4.49
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Ryan McNeil, free agent
Scouts love size and potential as press-cover corner. Has battled through injuries and does not play with lot of passion. Physical player with good strength and feel for tight coverage, but a bit stiff in hips and has tendency to jump on first move. Shows adequate recovery speed, but will get too far out of position to get back into play. Not much feel in zone coverage and overall instincts are questionable. Has lot of upside because of size/speed ratio. Needs to work hard to refine skills. **Notable:** Despite missing final three games because of hamstring injury, tied for third in Big Ten with three forced fumbles. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

17 Robert Bean, Mississippi State
5-10½ 171 4.58
5th or 6th round
NFL comparison: Dre' Bly, Rams
Smallish corner with marginal speed, but quickness and fluidity make him competitive in coverage. Excellent instincts and recognition skills. Rarely takes false steps and does good job mirroring in coverage, despite size limitations. Shows good burst out of backpedal and does fine job anticipating and jumping short routes. Matching up vs. bigger receivers will be challenge because he has trouble defending fade route. Has good ball skills and will make all the plays his measurables allow him to. Contributes in run support because of aggressiveness and recognition, but marginal strength is concern. Struggles to wrap up bruising ballcarriers. **Notable:** Set school record with interceptions in four straight games to close out '98 season. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

18 David Barrett, Arkansas
5-10 190 4.60
6th or 7th round
NFL comparison: Brian Kelly, Buccaneers
Competitive and does not give up lot of big plays, but speed and fluidity are less than impressive. Has some trouble in backpedal and does not do good job keeping cushion on his man in deep third. Has impressive intangibles, especially instincts and awareness. Does good job playing ball and uses body to get great position. Doesn't waste motion and footwork is technically sound, but potential to grow is simply not there. **Notable:** Interception return for touchdown on Tennessee's second offensive play ignited Arkansas to 28-24 win over Vols in '99. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

19 Jason Webster, Texas A&M
5-9 178 4.50
6th or 7th round
NFL comparison: Steve Israel, free agent
Prospect mostly because he's fearless leader and competitor. Size is obvious obstacle; most don't believe he can match up at NFL level. Has competitive speed and marginal quickness. Not a great overall athlete, but makes lot of plays because of aggressive style and instincts. Knows all the angles, and can read ball and react to play. Could contribute in dime package because of feel for passing game. Should be excellent special teams player. **Notable:** Was selected as team spokesman to answer questions regarding tragic A&M bonfire accident. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.5**

20 David Byrd, Syracuse
5-11⅜ 193 4.55
7th round or free agent
NFL comparison: Fred Vinson, Packers
Raw speed-and-size prospect before suffering multiple near-fatal stab wounds. Reportedly is recovering nicely and appears to be ready to resume career. Former track star who has lot of work to do in terms of technique and feel for position. Has size to play bump-and-run coverage, but needs experience. A fluid athlete who shows good burst in and out of backpedal. Pure speed makes him interesting-enough prospect to take chance on in late rounds. **Notable:** Sat out sophomore football season to compete for Syracuse's track and field team. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

21 Sedrick Curry, Texas A&M
6-1⅛ 193 4.50
7th round or free agent
NFL comparison: Charles Dimry, retired
Has size and competitive speed to compete. Aggressive player with good recognition skills and confidence to make it. Needs to improve footwork and fluidity in hips. Ball skills are solid; is impressive in zone coverage. Speed limits ability to match up in press coverage and does not show enough pure athleticism to blanket receiver in man coverage. Does well in run support and may project as safety if he continues to improve zone-coverage skills. **Notable:** When he finishes football career, wants to be FBI agent. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.5**

22 Reggie Austin, Wake Forest
5-9⅜ 172 4.36
7th round or free agent
NFL comparison: Dwayne Harper, free agent
Athletic, natural corner with good quickness and speed, but size and strength limit ability to match up with NFL's new breed of bigger, stronger, more physical receivers. Gets pushed around off line and bullied when fighting for jump ball. Outstanding footwork and hips. Excellent instincts, anticipation and reaction. Can blanket most receivers. Has excellent range and lot of burst in turns. No help in run support. **Notable:** Was MVP of high school baseball team four consecutive years. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

Others: Terrance Parrish, Southern Mississippi, 5-10, 190, 4.59; Todd Franz, Tulsa, 6-0⅝, 194, 4.51; Reggie Howard, Memphis, 5-11, 192, 4.55; Evan Howell, Oklahoma State, 5-11⅜, 183, 4.46; Jeff Harris, Georgia, 5-11, 175, 4.50; Renard Cox, Maryland, 5-11, 188, 4.46.

TSN Player Ratings

Safeties

OVERRATED
Barrett Green, West Virginia
Lack of range in coverage will limit his contributions on passing downs. Will have to play close to line in run support.

UNDERRATED
Mike Brown, Nebraska
Makes more plays than his size and skills would indicate. Nebraska's No. 2 all-time tackler defies measurables.

SLEEPER
Rogers Beckett, Marshall
Natural playmaker with great size and the potential to improve in all areas. Has good feel for passing game.

STOCK ON THE RISE
Tyrone Carter, Minnesota
Not a strong pass defender, but he makes too many plays in run support to ignore.

STOCK ON THE DECLINE
Sean Key, Florida State
A pure speedster with shaky coverage skills and a lack of size to defend against the run. A poor tackler, too.

What scouts are looking for

	Hgt.	Wgt.	40		Hgt.	Wgt.	40
NFL Average	6-0	200	4.55	NFL Minimum	5-10	190	4.65

This position has changed over the years as new schemes and trends have evolved. Several years ago, teams drafted or acquired big, physical safeties who would intimidate receivers over the middle, and they were especially effective in the run game. It was almost like having two additional linebackers on the field. However, with the advent of the run-and-shoot offense and more multi-receiver sets, this type of safety became a liability in passing situations. As a result, teams now are looking for more athletic, range-type guys. They still must be able to hit and come up against the run, but their ability to hit and tackle in the open field is more important. Many players can create a collision that looks good to the fans, but if they can't break down in the open field and make a key tackle, they hurt a defense. These players must have range and at least enough cover ability to match up on the slot receiver if the nickel package isn't on the field. It also helps if they're able to cover a back such as Marshall Faulk out of the backfield, which isn't an easy task. Many teams don't distinguish a difference between their strong and free safeties, but those that do likely want a little more physical player at strong safety. He must be a run stopper and have the ability to cover the tight end. The free safety is more of a center fielder with good instincts who also can make the secondary calls.

With the exception of Deon Grant, who projects as a sure first-round pick, this year's class is extremely average. Mike Brown, Barrett Green and Travares Tillman are the next three most-talented safeties, and even though they are possible second-round picks, one or two of them could drop to the third round.

The overall concern with this group is that too many players exhibit one-dimensional qualities—they're either strictly cover safeties with limited impact in run support or hard hitters with little cover skills.

***Denotes underclassman.**

1 Deon Grant, Tennessee *
6-2 205 4.40
1st round

NFL comparison: Carnell Lake, Jaguars

Coverage skills: Best overall cover skills of any safety. Outstanding body control. Can backpedal and burst out of cuts. Great speed and covers lot of ground. Can match up on slot receiver. Great feel in zone coverage. **Grade: 7.0**

Key and diagnose: Plays excellent "center field." Gets great jump on ball, rarely wastes motion. Outstanding at reading keys; not fooled by play-action. **Grade: 6.5**

Closing quickness: Explosive, with excellent change of direction and burst out of turns. Makes up lot of ground when ball is in air because of excellent second gear. Runs faster on football field than on track. **Grade: 7.0**

Ball skills: Good hands and gets to ball better than most others in this class. Great height and can jump with just about anybody. Good feel for playing ball and does nice job snatching it in air. **Grade: 7.0**

Run support: Not a strong tackler and has some trouble in space. Makes too many arm tackles. Not aggressive enough. **Grade: 4.5**

Notable: Led team with nine picks for 167 yards and one TD in '99.

Final analysis: Clearly top safety. Despite ineffectiveness in run support, certain first-round pick with exceptional coverage skills and range. **OVERALL GRADE: 32.0**

2 Barrett Green, W. Va.
6-0 217 4.60
2nd round

NFL comparison: Lawyer Milloy, Patriots

Coverage skills: Moving from linebacker; will need time to develop. Excellent feel in coverage and makes reads with ease. Always seems to be around ball. Enough size to match up in man-to-man situations, even on tight end. With more experience, projects as solid coverage safety. **Grade: 5.0**

Key and diagnose: Reads and reacts to play as well as anyone. Great feel for run and pass. Makes quick decisions and has nose for ball. **Grade: 6.5**

Closing quickness: Speed in deep third a concern, but quick enough to get into position where he won't be chasing. Projects as strong safety who will play closer to line of scrimmage in run support. **Grade: 5.5**

Ball skills: Lacks experience in this area, but snatches ball well and has good overall hands. Uses body well to gain position on receiver. Aggressive when ball is in air, but tends to be too physical; could have problems with pass interference. **Grade: 5.0**

Run support: Extremely aggressive and active. Like an extra linebacker on run downs. Solid tackler with some big-play ability. Good at taking on and avoiding blocks. Will be real asset vs. run. **Grade: 7.0**

Notable: Father played football for West Virginia coach Don Nehlen at Bowling Green; also played in the NFL.

Final analysis: Lot of work to do in coverage, but type of player who will contribute right away on first and second down because of impressive run-support skills. **OVERALL GRADE: 29.0**

ED NESSEN / TSN

BEEN AROUND: *Roman played safety for three years at LSU and cornerback for one, making him one of the most versatile players available.*

3 Mike Brown, Nebraska
5-10 202 4.61
2nd round

NFL comparison: Victor Green, Jets

Coverage skills: Bit undersized; matchup problems in most man-to-man situations. More a center fielder with great feel in space, but lacks overall movement to cover in slot. Good reaction skills and excellent at playing ball. Lacks overall coverage skills, but natural playmaker who defies measurables. **Grade: 5.5**

Key and diagnose: Shows excellent feel and makes quick decisions. Takes few false steps;

GRADING SCALE: 8—RARE; 7—OUTSTANDING; 6—GOOD; 5—ADEQUATE; 4—MARGINAL; 3—POOR

SPOTLIGHT
MIKE BROWN

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

Nebraska strong safety Mike Brown is an All-American on the field and in the classroom, but one of his most impressive traits won't earn him any awards or honors—he's a mentor.

"In practice in the summers, where the coaches couldn't be involved, he was a great help," says George Darlington, Nebraska's defensive backs coach. "Here's a player his teammates looked up to, who's telling them exactly what we wanted and what they should do."

Brown's leadership, as expected, carried over to games. Darlington is quick to point out that Brown "is one of those rare young men who can coach the secondary." He understands his on-field responsibilities and knows the assignments for every position. Brown was the Cornhuskers' defensive quarterback, making sure everyone was lined up in the right spot for a unit that ranked fourth in the nation (251.8 yards per game).

A high-intensity player, Brown leads by example and is as demanding of his teammates as he is of himself. Like all great quarterbacks, Brown isn't afraid of letting his teammates know when he thinks they're lollygagging. As Darlington puts it, Brown was quick to get into "people's shorts if they weren't doing what they were supposed to do."

Though Brown, who led Nebraska with 96 tackles and five interceptions last year, is a couple inches short and a few steps slow of the NFL's ideal specs for a safety, he compensates for his weaknesses with intelligence and dependability.

"He's extremely bright, not only academically, but also football-wise," says Darlington. "Because of that, his explosiveness and quickness in making plays sometimes is due to understanding as well as reading what is happening."

Because of Brown's below-average height and speed, his coverage skills are a concern. He had to refine his one-on-one technique his first two years at Nebraska, which is common for players who played strictly zone in high school. But now he breaks well on the ball in man coverage and has good change of direction.

His ability as a run-stuffer never has been questioned. Brown is adept at recognizing running plays and his quickness allows him to get to the ballcarrier in a hurry. Brown also is an excellent tackler who hits with authority.

Even with his few deficiencies, Brown plays well beyond his abilities. He is an outstanding player, with or without impeccable physical skills, and most NFL scouts are aware of that.—*Mark Bonavita*

great job reading play-action. **Grade: 6.5**
Closing quickness: Adequate quickness, but covers lot of ground because of excellent angles and great jump on ball. Not a burner, and speed limits ability to help in deep third, but lot of quickness in change of direction and nimble on feet. **Grade: 5.5**
Ball skills: Outstanding hands and can play ball in air. Takes excellent pursuit angles and physical enough to get body in position. Lacks great elevation, but great competitor who comes up with more than his share of jump balls. **Grade: 5.5**
Run support: Active vs. run and does excellent job flowing to ball carrier because of recognition and quickness. Extremely aggressive. Solid tackler who squares shoulders and delivers blow. **Grade: 5.5**
Notable: Second all-time at UN in career tackles.
Final analysis: Not an exceptional athlete, but makes more plays than skills would indicate. Could slip to late second round because teams are concerned with marginal speed. Natural playmaker. Should step right in and contribute. **OVERALL GRADE: 28.5**

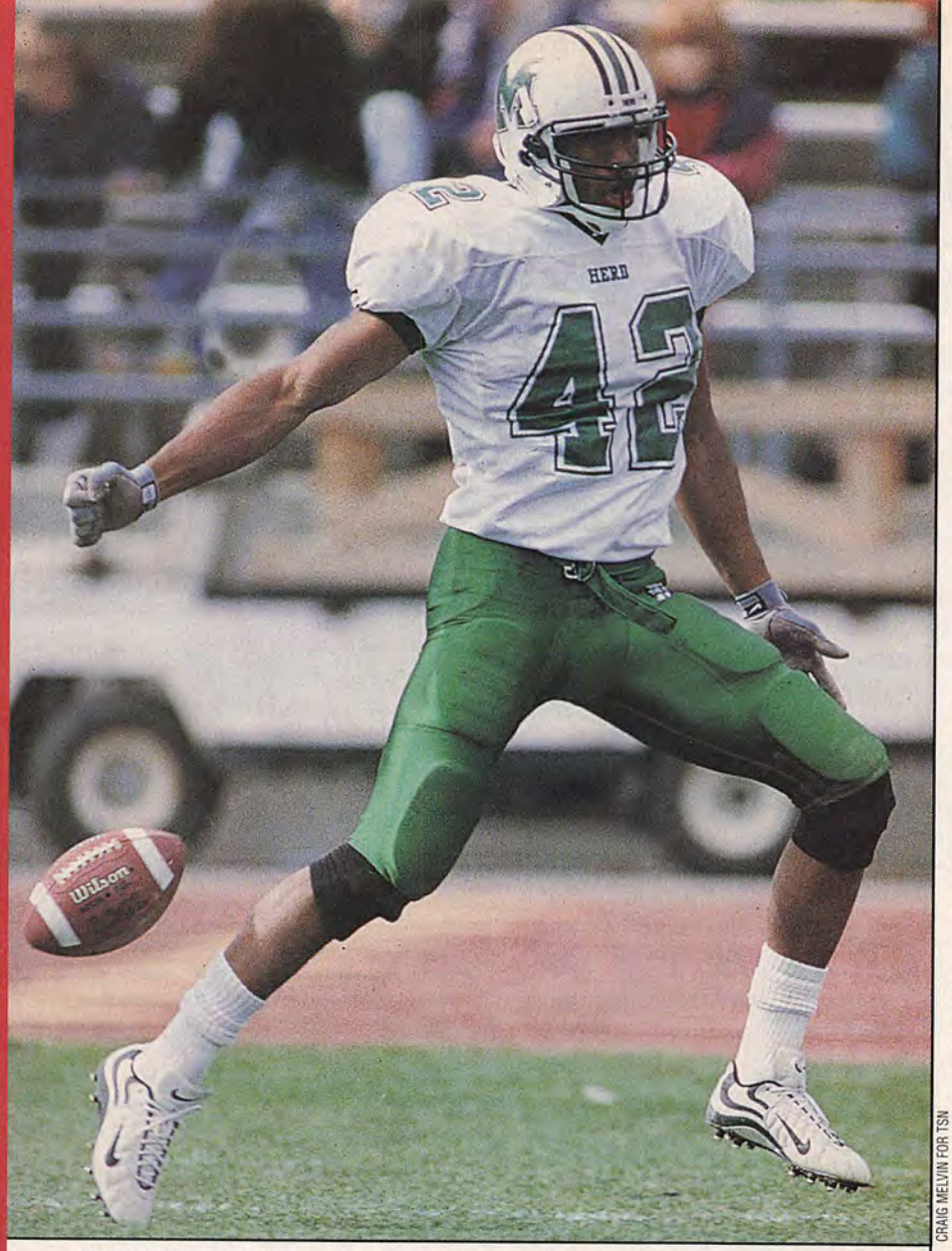
4 Travares Tillman, Georgia Tech
6-1⅛ 192 4.53
2nd or 3rd round
NFL comparison: Stevon Moore, Ravens
Projects as strong safety in NFL. Doesn't have great coverage skills and may be exposed in certain situations. Doesn't project as defender who could cover in slot, and stiff hips and average turns are concern in man-to-man situations. Excellent read-and-react skills and will be competent in zone coverage because of good ball skills and excellent pursuit angles. Aggressive run defender with strength and size to match up close to line of scrimmage. Solid, wrap-up tackler with good burst and explosion. Will be like extra linebacker on run downs and offer adequate help in zone coverage, especially underneath. **Notable:** Selected to ACC's All-Academic team last season. **OVERALL GRADE: 27.0**

5 Ashley Cooper, Mississippi State
5-10 215 4.60
2nd or 3rd round
NFL comparison: Rodney Harrison, Chargers
Intriguing because of size and aggressiveness vs. run. Good tackling skills and uncanny ability to take on blockers and get to ball carrier in open field. Does not have speed to play sideline to sideline, but takes excellent pursuit angles. Outstanding getting through traffic. More of short-area player in coverage. Not a lot of range, and lacks speed and fluidity to cover in slot. Physical enough to match up vs. tight end and good at getting body in position. Looks to be more of a first- and second-down defender with excellent run-support skills, but is bit of a liability in coverage. Must improve range and quickness before he can take an every-down role in NFL. **Notable:** Played for International Soccer USA during the summer in 1995.
OVERALL GRADE: 26.0

6 Rogers Beckett, Marshall
6-1¾ 204 4.59
3rd round
NFL comparison: Tim McDonald, free agent
Despite marginal speed and average athleticism, does good job in man-to-man coverage and has excellent feel in passing game. Range to match up in deep third, but will struggle vs. NFL's faster receivers. Uses body to get into position and aggressive when ball is in air. Also aggressive in run support and big enough to match up close to line of scrimmage. Not overly strong, but technically sound. Can take on powerful ball carriers because he plays with leverage and lowers shoulder when tackling. **Notable:** Served as Marshall's student body president for the 1999-2000 academic year. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.5**

7 Gary Berry, Ohio State
5-10 195 4.50
3rd round
NFL comparison: George Coghill, Broncos
Aggressive player with great experience at high level. Lacks natural coverage ability, especially in man-to-man situations, but has speed and quickness to improve. A bit stiff in hips and needs to work on change of direction. Good feel in zone coverage and enough range to play center field. Makes good reads and quick reactions. Best attribute is run support; active, attacks line of scrimmage. Physical tackler who has potential to improve as run defender if he can learn better pursuit angles. Shows an upside in all facets of game. Enough natural skills and an aggressive approach to contribute in certain situations right away. **Notable:** Buckeyes linebacker Na'il Diggs, Berry's younger teammate, is his uncle by marriage.
OVERALL GRADE: 25.0

8 Mark Roman, Louisiana State
5-10⅞ 181 4.55
3rd or 4th round
NFL comparison: Jay Bellamy, Seahawks
Projects as center field-type player with outstanding range. Shows good feel in man-to-man coverage and does excellent job breaking on ball. Sufficient-enough backpedal and quick-enough change of direction to do great



CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

DON'T FORGET ME: *Beckett may have been overlooked by the media when they converged on Huntington, W.Va., to cover Randy Moss and Chad Pennington in recent years, but NFL scouts know all about him.*

job in deep third. Biggest improvement needs to come in recognition and reading of keys. Spent most of career playing man coverage. Must learn to become more of surveyor who reads keys and breaks on ball. Excellent at playing ball in air; takes outstanding angles when attacking routes. Aggressive run defender who loves to "mix it up." Needs to become more powerful tackler, but technically sound and rarely misses ballcarrier. **Notable:** Played cornerback as senior after three years as free safety. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.5**

9 Arturo Freeman, South Carolina
6-0⅜ 196 4.55
3rd or 4th round

NFL comparison: Anthony Poindexter, Ravens

Athletic playmaker who appears to have recovered from major knee surgery in '98. Natural speed and quickness to compete in coverage, and can defend slot receiver. More of a coverage free safety who will play in deep third, but willing run defender and aggressive in run support. Needs to improve tackling skills; tendency to drag down ball carriers instead of squaring shoulders and laying a blow. **Notable:** Set South Carolina state high school record with 108 receptions. **OVERALL GRADE: 24.0**

10 Aric Morris, Michigan State
5-10⅛ 208 4.49
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Blaine Bishop, Titans

Smallish defender but great quickness and plenty of aggressiveness. Makes up for size limitations with physical approach. Good pure speed and shows burst in and out of cuts. Active in run support and will disregard body for big hit on ball carrier. Tends to overextend in space and will miss in lot of one-on-one tackle situations. Does not have measurables to match up in slot, but adequate range and enough feel in passing game to contribute in zone coverage. Takes good angles to ball. Marginal instincts and reaction skills, but good burst out of backpedal and is presence in middle of field. **Notable:** Received Danziger Award as Michigan State's top Detroit-area player. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.0**

11 Pedro Cirino, Boston College
5-11¼ 198 4.59
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Anthony Newman, free agent

Extremely active run defender who plays with ideal intensity and little fear. Plays lot bigger than measurables indicate. Huge presence in middle and excellent at sizing up receivers in air. Will attack line of scrimmage against run and has outstanding anticipation. Enough quickness and fluid enough to stay with most receivers, but tends to let them get behind him, mostly because he's so aggressive in run game and his catch-up speed leaves much to be desired. Skills to improve coverage, but a liability at this point; Will contribute only on first and second downs as run stuffer. **Notable:** Has worked as volunteer for Students Against Drunk Driving. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.5**

12 Sean Key, Florida State
5-10⅞ 187 4.38
4th or 5th round

NFL comparison: Brock Marion, Dolphins

Classic center fielder with tremendous speed and range in deep third. Does not offer lot of skills in man-to-man coverage. Has physical skills (hips, fluidity in motion) but does not show enough feel in man coverage to match up in slot. Good anticipation and does nice job reading and reacting. Tendency to take plays off. Does not offer much help in run support. Small and not willing to attack line or take on defenders. More a drag-down tackler with poor technique. Prospect on speed alone, but must improve overall consistency and aggressiveness. **Notable:** Shared Florida State's "second effort" award last spring with teammate Bobby Rhodes. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.0**

13 Kenoy Kennedy, Arkansas
6-0¾ 203 4.58
5th round

NFL comparison: John Lynch, Buccaneers

Rising on most teams' charts because of overall athletic ability and aggressive style vs. run. More coverage potential in deep third than as man-to-man defender. Excellent reading keys and reacting to ball. Stiff in hips and lacks change of direction to match up in slot. Shows good burst and attacks receiver when ball is in air. Great at locating ball and getting in position, which means he'll contribute as center fielder type of safety. Extremely aggressive in running game and matches up well close to line of scrimmage. Will attack gaps and is physical tackler with enough strength and size to take on bigger runners in NFL. Tends to overextend and misses some tackles because he is too aggressive in pursuit. **Notable:** Made 287 tackles for Arkansas, breaking Steve Atwater's career record. **OVERALL GRADE: 21.0**

14 Dwyte Smiley, Youngstown St.
6-1⅞ 192 4.45
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Orlando Thomas, Vikings

Raw prospect with exceptional size/speed ratio for safety. Battled lot of off-field problems last few years. Good instincts and feel in passing game, but footwork is marginal and needs lot of work on technique. Hips are a bit stiff and has lot of trouble in transition, which means he'll struggle in man-to-man coverage at next level. Lots of potential to improve and simply needs to work on flexibility as athlete. Tremendous speed and quickness, with potential to cover lot of ground. Key will be ability to improve pursuit angles and recognition between run and pass. Aggressive player willing to attack line of scrimmage, but gets caught up in traffic. Will lay hit on ball carrier, but does not always square shoulder and tends to aim too high and miss some sure tackles. **Notable:** Had 79 tackles, two sacks, an interception and a fumble recovery despite missing four games last season. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

15 Rashidi Barnes, Colorado
5-11⅝ 200 4.60
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: LeRoy Butler, Packers

Big, physical safety with reputation as big hitter. Loves to play close to line, and has size and strength to match up inside the box. Has marginal speed and tends to play a bit sluggish, but is aggressive and will sacrifice body to make play. Better on plays in front of him; is more a straight-line player with stiff hips and below-average change of direction. Doesn't have much coverage range, but gets by on instincts and ability to read and react to ball. Not fluid enough to match up in slot, but enough short-area quickness to contribute in underneath coverage. **Notable:** Received two community service awards from his hometown of Berkeley (Calif.) for his work with youth. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**

16 Tyrone Carter, Minnesota
5-7⅝ 182 4.59
5th or 6th round

NFL comparison: Tony Parrish, Bears

Seems to defy measurables because of outstanding feel for game and aggressive run support. Loves to attack line of scrimmage; excellent strength and technique as tackler. Average speed but plays with tremendous burst and acceleration. Lacks size to play strong safety and cover skills to play free safety. Decent range and good ball skills, but not real fluid in movement and stiff in hips. Can contribute on first and second down as run defender, but won't be able to match up in coverage and will rarely see field on passing downs. **Notable:** In his first collegiate start, set an NCAA record by returning two fumbles for touchdowns vs. Syracuse in '96. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.5**

17 Matt Bowen, Iowa
6-1¼ 202 4.42
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: Sam Shade, Redskins

Tough, physical player. Active, one-dimensional run defender who loves to mix it up close to line of scrimmage. Great pure speed and takes good pursuit angles. Sure tackler with good explosion through ball carrier. Has the speed and quickness to match up in coverage, but shows little feel for passing game. Enough catch-up speed to recover, but ball skills are poor and has trouble adjusting to ball in air. Excellent potential to contribute on special teams. **Notable:** Began college career as quarterback; moved to defensive back in spring of '97. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

18 George White, Boston College
6-0½ 205 4.49
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: Kurt Schulz, Lions

Stock rising because of size and competitive speed. Despite coverage problems in college, has quick feet and fluid hips to improve. Shows more skill in man-to-man coverage than in zone. Biggest problem in coverage is lack of feel, especially in space. Takes poor angles to ball and does not show lot of instincts with ball in air. Potential to dominate in run support, but not aggressive enough and has problems at point of attack. Does not take on blockers with enough leverage and attacks line of scrimmage too high. Needs time to improve feet and gain better feel for passing game, but could be late-round steal because of athleticism. **Notable:** In high school, he was one of the top two long jumpers in Ohio. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

19 Tommy Hendricks, Michigan
6-1⅝ 214 4.65
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: Donovin Darius, Jaguars

One-dimensional run-stuffer whose value as a strong safety at the NFL level may be underestimated. Extremely aggressive and active, and plays at high intensity level. Big-time hitter with excellent strength and explosion. Limited speed and lack of range is hard to overlook. Offers little in coverage and would be considered major liability on passing downs. Takes poor angles to ball and has limited ball skills in coverage. Projects as strictly a run defender who could play in scheme that features strong safety as extra linebacker close to line. **Notable:** Son of former Michigan linebacker Tom Hendricks, who lettered in 1954 and '55. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.5**

20 Pete Destefano, California
6-1 210 4.60
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: Marlon Forbes, free agent

Value at pro level limited because of marginal speed and poor flexibility. Well-built, but not a great athlete and does not run as well as NFL teams like. Shows some break on ball and usually gets in good position, but in trouble if he gets in track meet. Not real physical for size and does not do good-enough job in run support. Coaches and scouts are intrigued by his size and feel for game, but he'll need time to develop. May not be worth draft pick because he does not show enough potential to contribute in NFL coverage. **Notable:** Father, Dennis, played football at San Jose State and then for the semipro San Jose Apaches under coach Bill Walsh. **OVERALL GRADE: 17.0**

21 Deke Cooper, Notre Dame
6-2 215 4.65
6th or 7th round

NFL comparison: Lance Brown, free agent

Great size for a safety, but does not distinguish himself in coverage and tends to give up too much cushion. Marginal quickness and not enough change of direction for man-to-man coverage. Good instincts in zone coverage and some ballhawking ability as center fielder, but not enough speed or range for deep third. NFL teams like size/strength ratio and potential as run-stuffer, but does not close aggressively on run and not physical enough to match up close to line. Risk as a late-round pick because of so many holes in game, but has potential as special teams player, which could buy him time to develop. **Notable:** Began college career as wide receiver, but shifted to free safety as freshman. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

22 Tinker Keck, Cincinnati
6-0½ 200 4.45
7th round

NFL comparison: Larry Whigham, Patriots

Good-sized prospect battled nagging injuries that set back development. Speed improving, but just average skills in coverage and as run defender. Decent feel in zone coverage, but not enough natural athleticism to match up in man. A bit stiff in hips and struggles with turns. Tends to take poor angles when attacking ball and timing of jumps is inconsistent. Strong tackler with enough speed to chase plays down, but does not match up well enough near line and struggles at point of attack because he plays too erectly. Projects purely as special teams player who must improve in a lot of facets to get chance on defense. **Notable:** Named after former Oklahoma star Tinker Owens. **OVERALL GRADE: 15.5**

23 William Bartee, Oklahoma
6-1 195 4.55
7th round or free agent

NFL comparison: Darrius Johnson, Broncos

Bit of a stretch as NFL prospect, but enough feel in coverage and good-enough size to take a chance on. Competitive speed and quickness to contribute as center fielder type. Lot of instincts and does good job reading keys and reacting to ball, but struggles to match up in man coverage because of stiff hips and trouble with backpedal. Needs to be more aggressive in run support. Does nice job wrapping up as tackler, but not enough of presence close to line to contribute in run defense. **Notable:** Had 51 tackles, one interception and one fumble recovery last season. **OVERALL GRADE: 14.5**

Others: Brandon Jennings, Texas A&M, 6-0⅜, 199, 4.65; Trent Gamble, Wyoming, 5-9½, 187, 4.44; Earl Riley, Washington State, 6-0⅞, 203, 4.57; Clay Scanlon, Fort Hays State, 6-2, 207, 4.60; Tarius Davis, McNeese State, 5-11½, 228, 4.69; Ronnie Heard, Mississippi, 6-2¼, 213, 4.61.

TSN Player Ratings

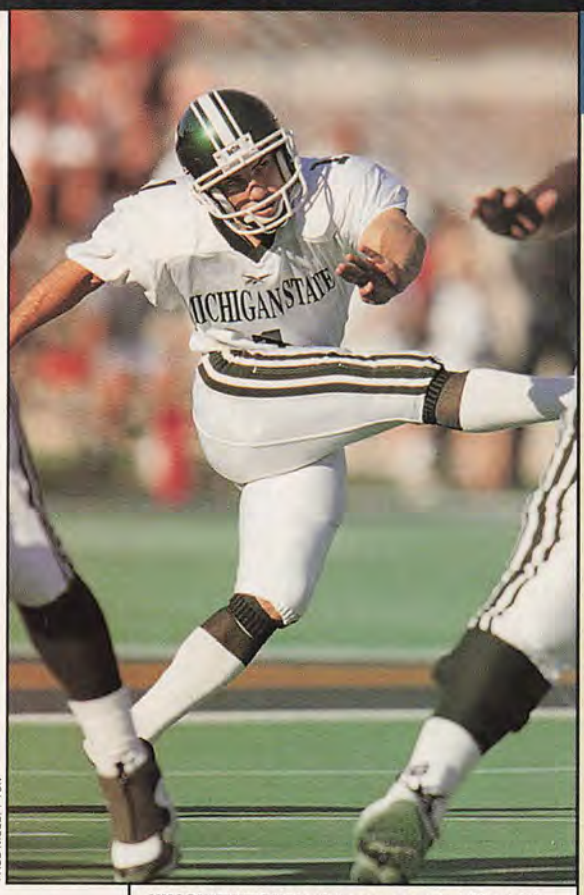
Kickers/Punters

*Denotes underclassman

Kickers

1 *Sebastian Janikowski, Florida State
6-2 255 5.02
2nd or 3rd round
By far, the top prospect. Has powerful leg capable of kicking well beyond 50 yards. Consistent kicker whose mechanics are excellent. Has potential to step right in and lead NFL in field-goal percentage and as kickoff specialist. Consistently puts kickoffs deep into end zone. Has shown athleticism and power as tackler in coverage. Only concern is off-field troubles and overall lack of discipline as person and player. **OVERALL GRADE: 25.5**

2 Paul Edinger, Mich. St.
5-8⅞ 172 5.00
6th or 7th round
Consistent overall, combining strong leg with excellent mechanics. Capable of kicking in clutch and close to automatic inside 45 yards. Has unconventional approach but seems to have excellent feel for adjusting to conditions. Gets attempts off quickly. **OVERALL GRADE: 20.0**



PAUL NISELY / TSN

UNCONVENTIONAL: *Edinger converted 43-of-54 field goals during his career at Michigan State.*

3 Shayne Graham, Virginia Tech
5-11⅝ 192 4.86
7th round
Clutch kicker who hit several game-winning field goals in college. Leg strength not spectacular. Is extremely consistent inside 45 yards. Is good enough on kickoffs to handle both duties in NFL. **OVERALL GRADE: 19.0**

4 Jason Strasser, Bowling Green
6-2 175 4.91
7th round or free agent
Tall, slender kicker with average power but excellent overall mechanics. Hasn't had to perform in many clutch situations. Has outstanding consistency and enough range to connect from over 50 yards. Has leg to drive ball into end zone regularly on kickoffs and has excellent control. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

Other: Nathan Villegas, Oregon, 5-8, 166, 4.97.

Punters

1 Shane Lechler, Texas A&M
6-1¾ 231 4.90
4th round
Strong-legged, consistent punter with great size and athletic ability. Has explosive leg and does excellent job getting ball away quickly in pressure situations. Directional punting skills have improved each season. Has developed into excellent placement punter with good sense of angles. Doubles as fine kickoff man. **OVERALL GRADE: 22.5**

2 Andrew Bayes, East Carolina
6-1¾ 194 4.95
6th or 7th round
Led nation with 48-yard average as senior. Hang time is adequate. Has improved tremendously as directional punter and does good job getting ball off under pressure. Shows potential to double as situational kicker with strong leg. **OVERALL GRADE: 18.0**

3 Brian Schmitz, North Carolina
6-1 165 4.89
7th round or free agent
Developed into one of top punters last season, averaging more than 47 yards. Ranked among top five in attempts and showed great consistency. Exceptional work ethic. Could use more leg strength and should improve boom over time but is ready to contribute. **OVERALL GRADE: 16.0**

Others: Deone Horinek, Colorado State, 6-2⅛, 234, 5.00; John Baker, North Texas, 6-2¾, 220, 4.95.

What scouts are looking for

Kickers

The best quality a kicker can have is consistency. He must be mentally tough, knowing that the outcome of a game may be riding on his leg. He also has to be able to adjust to all kinds of weather conditions. A strong leg is desired because of long-range field goal and kickoff responsibilities, but many kickers play into their late 30s even though their leg strength may be in decline. They have something coaches covet and younger kickers don't have: experience. Many coaches will get another player to handle kickoff duties (in many cases, it will be the punter) and will sacrifice long-range field goals for accuracy inside the 40. Because of the mental pressure associated with the job, there aren't a lot of young kickers in the league at any given time. Sometimes they will bounce around for four or five years and go to several camps before they get their shot. NFL coaches usually are hesitant to put a game's outcome in the hands of a young, inexperienced kicker.

Punters

Teams want a punter who has a strong leg, can get good hang time and also gets good direction on his punts. The ability to put the ball where he wants sometimes can compensate for a lack of distance. A punter also needs to be fairly athletic, able to handle a bad snap and be some type of a threat to run or throw out of punt formation. Getting the ball off quickly is very important—most teams prefer a two-step punter with a quick release. A slow, three-step punter will get too many punts blocked to last very long in the league. In many cases, the punter serves as the holder on field-goal and extra-point attempts.

Kickoff and punt returners

These are jobs teams hope to fill with roster players such as wide receivers, running backs or cornerbacks. It is becoming increasingly popular to draft a player who can return kicks and fill in at another position. NFL coaches, for the most part, don't like to use starting players on special teams. The qualities for a punt returner and kickoff returner are somewhat different. A punt returner must have excellent hands, be able to focus on the ball and have the ability to avoid tackles while weaving his way through traffic. Many good punt returners don't have great speed, but they have great quickness and instincts; they know how to avoid getting hit. A kickoff returner is usually a little bit bigger and more physical (possibly a reserve running back), and his skills may be more straight-line and speed oriented. He is expected to run north and south, not dance, when he gets the ball. A good kickoff man will attack the cover team.

Arizona CARDINALS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Although the Cardinals are not reckless on draft day, they have a good feel for the draft and aren't afraid to make a move when it appears beneficial. Arizona was devastated by injuries and holdouts in 1999, and the jury still may be out on how good a job it has done the past three years, but it certainly appears the team is going in the right direction. The Cardinals picked up three veteran contributors, a second-round pick (CB Corey Chavous) and a future No. 1 pick (WR David Boston) for simply swapping places (moving down one spot) with San Diego in '98. The Chargers selected QB Ryan Leaf, and the Cardinals drafted DE Andre Wadsworth.

General manager Bob Ferguson has an excellent working relationship with coach Vince Tobin and his staff, but with the coaches in the last year of their contracts, it will be interesting to see if they have quality input into this draft or if it simply is a lame-duck coaching staff. Arizona has a solid scouting staff, but Ferguson runs the show and seems to have the blessing of owner Bill Bidwill.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

RB: The Cardinals did not score a first-quarter touchdown in '99, and they must add some punch to their running game. Adrian Murrell is a free agent, but he appears to be slipping and likely will not be back. Youngster Michael Pittman could have a future if he stays healthy—that is a real question within the organization—and backup Mario Bates is a journeyman with a variety of skills, none of which put him into the starter category. The Cardinals desperately need a franchise-type running back who can give them 25 to 30 carries a game. That would automatically upgrade an underachieving offensive line and take pressure off QB Jake Plummer.

DT: A year ago, this position appeared to be a huge strength, but injuries have taken their toll. Mark Smith, Rashod Swinger and Eric Swann are coming off knee injuries, and none can be counted on for a 16-game season. Smith is a restricted free agent and may have a bitter taste in his mouth for having to play for a ridiculously low salary (in his estimation) last season.

OLB: Veteran Rob Fredrickson was a great find in free agency in '99, but the Cardinals need a solid starter who can play the run and the pass. Current starter Zack Walz is coming off a serious knee surgery. Patrick Sapp is no better than a backup and is a free agent who likely will look elsewhere. Johnny Rutledge, a second-round pick last year, isn't close to being ready. If it doesn't find a starter opposite Rob Fredrickson, Arizona could be in trouble.

OT: The Cardinals have two promising players in LT L.J. Shelton (a No. 1 pick in '99) and RT James Dexter. Neither is ready for the Pro Bowl, although if Shelton develops in the offseason, he will take a lot of pressure off the underachieving line. At the least, the Cardinals could use a third tackle to give them depth. They have never gotten over losing veteran Lomas Brown to Cleveland.

S: SS Tommy Bennett is coming off reconstructive knee surgery, which likely will make him expendable. He plays more like a linebacker and is a liability in coverage. Pat Tillman could move into Bennett's spot, but his skills are similar. The Cardinals desperately need an athletic safety who has range and cannot be exploited in coverage.

MLB: Starter Ronald McKinnon, who was re-signed in February, is undersized, and there are continuing questions whether he is big and physical enough to hold up on an every-down basis. If the Cardinals find the right player at the right price, they could pick up another middle linebacker in free agency or the draft.

G: The interior offensive line sadly lacks athleticism and is not a very good matchup group, especially in pass protection. A starter or No. 3 swing guard would be an upgrade.

QB: Veteran backup Dave Brown, who has not shown the ability to run this offense consistently, returns. With Plummer's inconsistency, the Cardinals desperately need a quality backup, and they might even look to the draft to upgrade their No. 3 spot. They are very thin behind Plummer.

TE: The only legitimate tight end on the roster is Terry Hardy, but he is not a player teams must game-plan against. The Cardinals would love to steal a top-notch tight end in the middle rounds.

FB: Although rookie Joel Makovicka started every game last season, he was not the same player he was at Nebraska and is not an asset in the passing game. The team misses Larry Centers, now playing in Washington.

OUTLOOK

The Cardinals have a "clean" draft in that they have all of their own picks (the seventh in each round).

Look for the Cardinals to focus on the running back position. Virginia's Thomas Jones or Alabama's Shaun Alexander could give them a much-needed running game. If they go for defense, they must hope Florida State DT Corey Simon drops to them, or they could select from an interesting group of defensive ends. One safety who might interest them is Tennessee's Deon Grant.

The team is sitting in a solid spot at No. 7. There really isn't a great player who merits the team trying to move up, but there may be some who interest it enough to drop down a few spots. This may be one of those drafts where the best move is no move.

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

SHAUN ALEXANDER

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jake Plummer	Dave Brown
FB	Joel Makovicka	Dennis McKinley
RB	Michael Pittman	Mario Bates
WR	Rob Moore	David Boston
WR	Frank Sanders	Mac Cody
TE	Terry Hardy	Chris Gedney
LT	L.J. Shelton	Matt Joyce
LG	James Dexter*	Chris Dishman
C	Mike Gruttadauria	Aaron Graham*
RG	Lester Holmes	Yusuf Scott
RT	Anthony Clement	James Dexter*

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Scott Player	K	Cary Blanchard

DEFENSE

LE	Andre Wadsworth	Brad Ottis
LT	Eric Swann	Rashod Swinger
RT	Jerry Drake	Mark Smith
RE	Simeon Rice	Tom Burke
LOLB	Rob Fredrickson	Johnny Rutledge
MLB	Ronald McKinnon	Mark Maddox*
ROLB	Zack Walz	Patrick Sapp*
LC	Aeneas Williams	J.J. McCleskey
SS	Tommy Bennett*	Pat Tillman
FS	Kwamie Lassiter	J.J. McCleskey
RC	Tom Knight	Corey Chavous

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Text by The War Room.

Atlanta FALCONS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Although the Falcons don't boast a well-known front office, the unit works well together. Dan Reeves has surrounded himself with trusted aides who are loyal to him and his philosophy. Reeves is a hands-on coach who is involved in all personnel decisions. He has the final say on player acquisitions but will take input from coaches, G.M. Harold Richardson and pro personnel director Ron Hill.

The scouts and coaches have been together a long time. This is a steady group that doesn't take chances. Reeves emphasizes character and toughness, qualities he possessed as a player. It will be interesting to see how the Falcons approach this draft, given the team's disastrous 5-11 season, aging roster, uncertainty as to how much longer Reeves will coach and the fact the club has no first-round selection.

Because of the front office's experience, the Falcons don't figure to panic as they rebuild, but they may be further from returning to the Super Bowl than many think.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

WR: Even with signing free agent Shawn Jefferson, this undersized unit could use a consistent threat. Tony Martin's off-field problems were a concern, but the team shouldn't have let him get away to Miami. His ability to stretch defenses was missed last season. Tim Dwight showed what he's capable of with a dominant season finale against San Francisco (seven catches for 162 yards and two TDs and a punt return for a TD). Chris Calloway did nothing last season. Besides starter Terance Mathis, the rest of the group is a collection of training-camp bodies.

FS: Eugene Robinson gave the team a few productive seasons but won't return. The Falcons have allowed too many big plays and will look to add speed. Robinson was a smart player, but the Falcons need more range from the position.

QB: Entering his 13th season, Chris Chandler is on the downside of his career, and neither Danny Kanell nor Tony Graziani stepped up when given the opportunity last season. The Falcons would like to squeeze a few more years out of Chandler, but his fragility might not let that happen.

RB: It's difficult to predict how Jamal Anderson will bounce back from his ACL injury. Most players lose at least a half-step, which was the case for Byron Hanspard when he returned last year from a similar injury. Anderson never possessed great speed, so any reduction could be noticeable. The Hanspard/Ken Oxendine platoon was a disaster, and the team needs to add a reliable backup capable of moving the chains if something again happens to Anderson.

DT: The starters are set, but who's going to back them up? Position coach Bill Kollar gets the most out of Travis Hall and Shane Dronett, but they would be more effective if a rotation could be implemented.

C: Robbie Tobeck developed into a reliable starter, but the team likely will opt to re-sign versatile reserve Evan Pilgrim to fill the position. Pilgrim played well when forced to start last season but has been nothing more than a backup in the past. With a questionable situation at guard, the Falcons need steady play in the middle.

DE: With Chuck Smith off to Carolina and Lester Archambeau off to Denver, change is taking place. The team signed free agent Brady Smith from the Saints and will go with Patrick Kerney, a first-round pick last year, at the other spot. He made strides last year. Depth is nonexistent, which forces the starters to log too many minutes.

CB: Ray Buchanan is one of the game's best. He'll team with Saints free-agent signee Ashley Ambrose to give the team one of the league's top corner duos. Ambrose's signing means Ronnie Bradford can return to his natural safety position.

Reeves is ready to give up on former No. 1 pick Michael Booker, and the team lacks youngsters capable of assuming Bradford's role. New position coach Greg Brown loves to play bump-and-run coverage, which means the Falcons must get speed.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

R. JAY SOWARD

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

OUTLOOK

When Atlanta gave up this year's No. 1 selection to the Ravens to obtain Baltimore's second-round pick in 1999, it never dreamed it would be the No. 5 selection in the 2000 draft.

The Falcons were coming off the Super Bowl and assumed their No. 1 selection in 2000 would be near the bottom of the first round. However, that's not the case after their horrid 1999 season.

Look for the Falcons to tab a top-line receiver with their first pick (a second rounder). There should be a solid group of wideouts available, including USC's R. Jay Soward, Texas' Kwame Cavil and Florida State's Ron Dugans. This seems to be a situation where need and value match.

However, the Falcons desperately need help at right offensive tackle and must fortify an aging defense. If all else fails, the team could select the best athlete available.

Don't look for Atlanta to maneuver a lot. It's not Reeves' style. When the Falcons did last year, it wound up hurting them in this draft. The club likely will take a conservative approach. There are many holes, but they all won't be filled in this draft.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Chris Chandler	Danny Kanell
FB	Bob Christian	Jeff Paulk
RB	Jamal Anderson	Byron Hanspard
WR	Terance Mathis	Tim Dwight
WR	Shawn Jefferson	Chris Calloway
TE	O.J. Santiago	Brian Kozlowski
LT	Bob Whitfield	Jose Portilla
LG	Bob Hallen	Greg Bishop
C	Robbie Tobeck*	Evan Pilgrim
RG	Calvin Collins	Greg Bishop
RT	Ephraim Salaam	Jose Portilla

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Dan Stryzinski	K	Morten Andersen

DEFENSE

LE	Brady Smith	Pellom McDaniels
LT	Travis Hall	Edwards Jasper
RT	Shane Dronett	Ben Huff
RE	Patrick Kerney	Pellom McDaniels
LOLB	Keith Brooking	Ruffin Hamilton*
MLB	Jessie Tuggle	Jeff Kelly
ROLB	Henri Crockett	
LC	Ray Buchanan	Elijah Williams
SS	Marty Carter	Gerald McBurrows
FS	Ronnie Bradford	Omar Brown
RC	Ashley Ambrose	Michael Booker

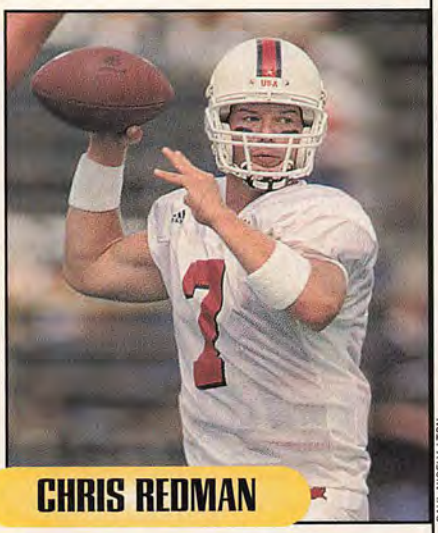
■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Baltimore RAVENS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The front office is developing into a solid group, led by vice president Ozzie Newsome, who oversees personnel decisions. He has an outstanding staff led by Phil Savage, who concentrates on the draft, and James Harris, who focuses on pro personnel. Newsome is a non-ego guy who welcomes input from all of his scouts and coaches. As a result, morale in the front office is high because all involved know they have a voice. But final decisions usually come down to Newsome, coach Brian Billick, owner Art Modell and Savage.

The Ravens have overcome severe cap problems, which plagued them in their early days in Baltimore, and they now have a solid, young nucleus. The team puts a premium on speed and athletic ability, but the Ravens will draft more with need in mind. They seem to be doing a good job identifying their needs and attacking them in free agency and the draft. This is a front office that bears watching as the Ravens show improvement.



CHRIS REDMAN

PAUL NISELY / TSN

TEAM NEEDS

WR: The roster resembled a home for wayward receivers last season. Guys who couldn't hang on anywhere found homes in Baltimore. Qadry Ismail had a fine season but is only a second or third option. If Justin Armour is retained and a high pick is used on a receiver, this unit will be more productive.

RB: Priest Holmes has proved to be a workhorse, but Billick would like more help. The former Vikings offensive coordinator isn't far removed from having a breakaway threat like Robert Smith, so he remembers what a difference speed can make. With Errict Rhett gone to Cleveland in free agency, look for the Ravens to use a high pick at this spot.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

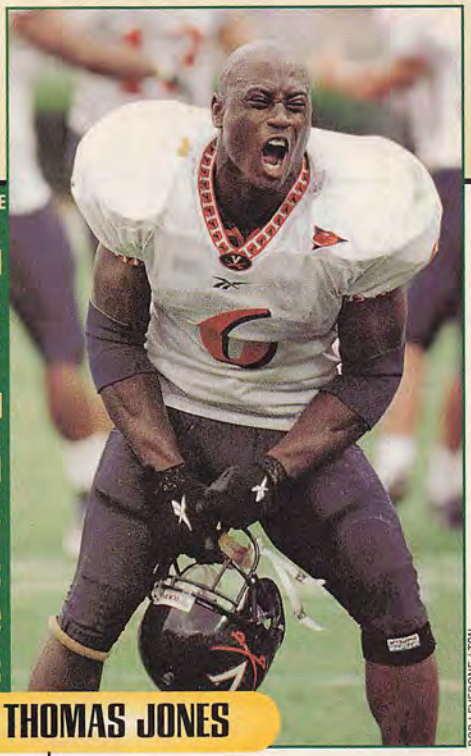
MLB: The off-field problems of Pro Bowl LB Ray Lewis means this position must be addressed. Baltimore likely will sign a low-priced veteran until Lewis' situation is resolved.

QB: All three quarterbacks from '99 were free agents, but Tony Banks was re-signed and should retain the starting job he owned in the second half of '99. The Ravens finished strong under Banks, who should continue to develop with another year in Billick's system. Stoney Case is a staff favorite and could return, but the team still will need another backup.

DT: Baltimore has mishandled this position in the past. Last year, the team let James Jones leave for Detroit. Tony Siragusa is still capable, but he's aging (33). It's important to keep starter Larry Webster. One guy to watch is Lional Dalton, who was impressive during stints last season.

RT: Harry Swayne, who's entering his 14th season, is a big, mobile pass blocker, but he tends to struggle against physical ends. Like Swayne, Spencer Folau also was injured much of last season, but the team hasn't given up on him.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS



THOMAS JONES

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

LG: The Ravens weren't planning on losing Everett Lindsay a year after signing him from Minnesota. It won't be easy for Edwin Mulitalo to replace him.

TE: Aaron Pierce retired, but the Ravens signed Shannon Sharpe, a longtime standout in Denver. The addition of Sharpe has changed tight end from a problem area to a strength. With Greg DeLong, Ryan Collins, and A.J. Ofodile also around, it's unlikely the Ravens will spend much time looking at tight ends in the draft.

OUTLOOK

With the fifth pick and the 15th choice (after losing a coin flip to Green Bay), the Ravens are in position to load up on offense. At the end of last season, it appeared they could go many directions with the fifth spot. The departure of Rhett has created a void at running back. To fill it, look for the Ravens to tab a running back, where either Virginia's Thomas Jones or Alabama's Shaun Alexander would be a nice fit.

With their second pick in the first round, the Ravens could look to the future and draft Louisville QB Chris Redman. He would have time to develop behind Banks. If the team chooses to go another direction with the pick, it could tab a receiver. This draft classes features lots of depth at the spot. Guys such as Florida's Travis Taylor and Jackson State's Sylvester Morris may be available.

Baltimore loaded up on defensive talent early in past drafts, but the focus will shift to the offense. Billick suffered through a frustrating first year and isn't ready to relive it. With the team committed to Banks, it needs to surround him with talent.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Tony Banks	Stoney Case
FB	Chuck Evans	Obafemi Ayanbadejo
RB	Priest Holmes	Jay Graham
WR	Patrick Johnson	Justin Armour*
WR	Qadry Ismail*	Jermaine Lewis
TE	Shannon Sharpe	Greg DeLong
LT	Jonathan Ogden	Spencer Folau
LG	Edwin Mulitalo	Kipp Vickers
C	Jeff Mitchell	Mike Flynn
RG	Mike Flynn	Kipp Vickers
RT	Harry Swayne	Sammy Williams

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Kyle Richardson	K	Matt Stover

DEFENSE

LE	Rob Burnett*	Fernando Smith
LT	Larry Webster*	Martin Chase
RT	Tony Siragusa	Lional Dalton
RE	Michael McCrary	Keith Washington*
LOLB	Peter Boulware	Cornell Brown
MLB	Ray Lewis	Tyrell Peters
ROLB	Jamie Sharper	Brad Jackson
LC	Chris McAlister	
SS	Kim Herring	Anthony Poindexter
FS	Rod Woodson	Corey Harris*
RC	Duane Starks	

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Buffalo BILLS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Under G.M. John Butler, Buffalo is one of the strongest and most unified front offices in the NFL. Although Bill Polian rightfully gets credit for Buffalo's success in the 1980s and '90s, Butler has been instrumental in keeping this franchise on top. He has an innate ability for retooling his roster without disrupting chemistry.

He has outstanding aides in Dwight Adams, who handles college scouting, and A.J. Smith, who runs pro scouting. These guys have been together a long time and are in sync in terms of philosophy and attributes they look for in a player. The Bills do an especially good job finding obscure players from small schools. They also do a great job in the later portions of the draft. Players like WR Andre Reed (Kutztown State), DE Phil Hansen (North Dakota State), and WR Don Beebe (Chadron State) weren't household names on draft day, but all became contributors.

The front office has faith in its grading system and draft board and rarely reaches for a player. Butler, who places a premium on character, lets the draft come to him and does an excellent job addressing need without compromising value.

The coaching staff and scouts respect each other. While they work well together, the coaches defer most of the decisions to the scouting staff.

TEAM NEEDS

G: Buffalo's running game will take a huge hit with the expected departure of Ruben Brown as a free agent. To compound matters, the team also has conceded the loss of versatile Dusty Zeigler. The Bills think they can get by with Joe Panos and Jamie Nails, but depth is a concern. They could get help in the early rounds of the draft.

DE: Replacing Bruce Smith's production will be tough, but his leadership will be missed most. Marcellus Wiley will start and may be a surprise with his pass-rush ability. Hansen is an overachiever who always gets the job done. Like most positions on the team, depth is needed.

FS: Look for Keion Carpenter or Daryl Porter to replace Kurt Schulz, who signed with Detroit. Regardless of who gets the job, Buffalo will miss Schulz's physical presence. Schulz also was the signal-caller of the secondary. Carpenter and Porter were special teams guys last season. Expect the Bills to use a high pick here.

CB: Thomas Smith, the most talented cover corner in free agency this year, jumped to Chicago and will be replaced by '99 top pick Antoine Winfield. Buffalo won't be able to cover as well with Winfield, but he'll bring intensity to the unit.

WR: The Bills will open with Eric Moulds and Peerless Price, giving them perhaps the best vertical pair in the AFC. However, without Reed working the underneath routes, Buffalo will have a difficult time getting the ball downfield. Although tight end Jay Riemersma is a top option, Buffalo must find a competent receiver to work the slot. Kevin Williams is best suited for the No. 4 spot.

OLB: Gabe Northern's inconsistency bothered the coaching staff, so they are happy to be starting over with Keith Newman, an intriguing player because of his athletic ability. He's still an unknown, but the Bills feel he will be at least as effective as Northern.

C: Jerry Ostroski is nothing more than a stopgap, so an upgrade will be needed eventually. For now, the team has too many other pressing needs that need attention. Zeigler's departure leaves them with inexperienced-but-promising Bill Conaty as their only backup option.

P: While the Bills contend he's valuable in inclement weather, punter Chris Mohr needs to be replaced. He finished last season with the lowest net average in the league.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

DWAYNE GOODRICH

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

OUTLOOK

With the offseason losses of guys like Smith, Thurman Thomas and Reed, Butler has plenty of options with the 26th pick. The Bills likely will start seven new players—three offense, four defense—next season. Without one or two glaring needs, look for them to take the best player available.

The Bills probably will look to bolster the perimeter of their defense, opting for either an end or outside linebacker. Ends like Virginia Tech's John Engelberger or Kansas State's Darren Howard are possibilities, as are linebackers such as Syracuse's Keith Bulluck, who would be a huge athletic upgrade. Another possibility is Tennessee cornerback Dwayne Goodrich. When Buffalo picks, he may be the best athlete available. Plus, he would fill the void caused by Thomas Smith's departure.

On offense, the Bills could go for a guard or receiver. Having lost their starting guards as free agents, Buffalo could take a guy like Tennessee's Cosey Coleman, one of the most intriguing juniors in the draft. Buffalo probably could get a quality receiver in the second or third round considering the depth of this year's receiving corps. Buffalo should have a talented group to pick from, including Florida State's Ron Dugans, West Virginia's Jerry Porter and USC's R. Jay Soward. If they go for a receiver in the first round, the Bills could end up fielding some of the best multiple-receiver sets in the AFC.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Rob Johnson	Doug Flutie
FB	Sam Gash	Jonathan Linton
RB	Antowain Smith	Lennox Gordon
WR	Eric Moulds	Kamil Loud
WR	Peerless Price	Kevin Williams
TE	Jay Riemersma	Bobby Collins
LT	John Fina	Marcus Spriggs
LG	Ruben Brown*	Jamie Nails
C	Jerry Ostroski	Bill Conaty
RG	Dusty Zeigler*	Joe Panos
RT	Robert Hicks	Marcus Spriggs

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Chris Mohr	K	Steve Christie

DEFENSE

LE	Phil Hansen	Sean Moran*
NT	Ted Washington	Pat Williams
RE	Marcellus Wiley	Sean Price
LOLB	Sam Rogers	Dan Bradenburg
LILB	John Holecek	Jay Foreman
RILB	Sam Cowart	Marlo Perry*
ROLB	Gabe Northern*	Keith Newman
LC	Ken Irvin	Donovan Greer
SS	Henry Jones	Keion Carpenter
FS	Daryl Porter	Manny Martin*
RC	Antoine Winfield	Donovan Greer

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Carolina PANTHERS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Coach George Seifert has done an outstanding job of uniting the team's coaching and front-office staffs. This was a franchise struggling to find its identity when Seifert was hired before the 1999 season. But his calm, no-ego management style has worked well. The Panthers have gone through some difficult adjustments—primarily the switch from a 3-4 defense to a 4-3, which made a lot of players expendable and changed overall team needs. And Seifert has had to adjust to owner Jerry Richardson and his sons, who are involved in the day-to-day operations. For the most part, they have left Seifert alone and let him run the show.

Veteran personnel director Jack Bushofsky is a blue-collar talent evaluator who organizes the draft well and provides Seifert with all the information he wants. The coaching staff is moderately involved and Seifert solicits everybody's opinion before making a final decision. Morale is high, everybody is on the same page and there is a feeling that everybody is involved in rebuilding this team.

The Panthers are adopting a draft-by-need philosophy because their roster has so many holes. They do not have the best-athlete-available luxury and they probably will be conservative and predictable. Don't expect them to make a lot of moves, and look for them to take players off the board the way they have them graded. This is an efficient, not charismatic, front office.

TEAM NEEDS

SS: This is an area of need, whether it's filled in free agency or the draft. Starter Brent Alexander doesn't have much range and seldom makes plays in coverage. Opposing quarterbacks scorched the Panthers last season and only so much blame can be placed on the pass rush. Backup Damien Richardson fits into the one-dimensional, run-stuffing category.

ILB: The release of leading tackler Micheal Barrow created an unexpected void. Barrow rarely made big plays, but he was a steady force who won't be easy to replace. The Panthers are looking at Hannibal Navies or Kory Minor to take his place, but neither is ready for full-time duty. If Carolina opens the season with Navies or Minor in the middle, teams will have success running between the tackles.

DT: Sean Gilbert remains an underachiever. He's solid, but he doesn't dominate the way the coaching staff thinks he should. Tim Morabito started every game last season and failed to come up with a sack. He should be a backup who sees spot duty.

OLB: Fan favorite Kevin Greene retired in January and it will be tough to replace his 12 sacks. It's possible former 49er Lee Woodall could sign and reunite with his former coach, but this could be the position the Panthers address with their first pick (No. 23) if the right player is available. Carolina signed Donta Jones to solidify this position, but he was a big disappointment last season.

G: A quality starter and depth are needed at this position, where pass protection is a big problem. The team hopes Jamar Nesbit, a second-year, undrafted free agent, will provide much-needed athleticism. Bryan Stoltenberg struggled as a starter when Matt Campbell was injured last season. Stoltenberg is reliable off the bench, but probably isn't a long-term solution.

RB: Tshimanga Biakabutuka got off to a hot 1999 start before battling injuries. He could be the only holdover on this unit. Off-the-field problems and lack of production on the field leave Fred Lane's future in question, and Anthony Johnson will not be re-signed. Depth is a big concern because of Biakabutuka's medical history.

TE: Pro Bowl player Wesley Walls is coming off one of his finest seasons, but age is a concern. Walls and backup Brian Kinchen have 25 years of experience between them, leaving Kris Mangum as heir apparent. It's time to address the future of this position.

DE: The front office addressed this need with the free-agent signings of Atlanta's Chuck Smith, who is expected to start opposite Jason Peter, and St. Louis' Jay Williams. Chuck Wiley, who failed to record a sack in '99, will fit better in a backup role.

OUTLOOK

With the 23rd pick, the team could go several directions. The Panthers were able to score last season, but the defense floundered. The defensive unit is loaded with underachievers and over-the-hill veterans and needs speed, especially at outside linebacker and safety. A couple of free-agent additions, including former Falcons DE Chuck Smith and former Vikings CB Jimmy Hitchcock, should help, but an infusion of athleticism will be needed before Seifert can implement his attacking style.

Although logic tells you the Panthers will look at a top-flight OLB such as Tennessee's Raynoch Thompson or Syracuse's Keith Bulluck, they also could try to beef up the secondary with a corner such as Tennessee's Dwayne Goodrich, Ohio State's Ahmed Plummer or Jackson State's Rashard Anderson. Another strong possibility is Tennessee G Cosey Coleman, who would strengthen a soft interior.

An interesting possibility is Louisville QB Chris Redman. Steve Beuerlein is coming off a Pro Bowl season but is in the twilight of his career. Seifert loves young backup Jeff Lewis, but nobody knows if he can play on a consistent basis. Redman is likely to be gone before the Panthers select, but if he's available, they may well pounce on him.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

COSEY COLEMAN

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE			DEFENSE		
QB	Steve Beuerlein	Jeff Lewis	LE	Jason Peter	Mike Rucker
FB	William Floyd	Chris Hetherington	LT	Tim Morabito*	Chuck Wiley
RB	Tim Biakabutuka	Fred Lane	RT	Sean Gilbert	Chuck Wiley
WR	Muhsin Muhammad	Donald Hayes	RE	Chuck Smith	Jay Williams
WR	Patrick Jeffers	Jim Turner	LOLB	Donta Jones	Kory Minor
TE	Wesley Walls	Brian Kinchen	MLB	Dean Wells	Steve Tovar
LT	Clarence Jones	Dan Best	ROLB	Hannibal Navies	Kory Minor
LG	Matt Campbell	Clay Shiver	LC	Eric Davis	Jimmy Hitchcock
C	Frank Garcia	Bryan Stoltenberg	SS	Brent Alexander	Damien Richardson
RG	Jamar Nesbit	Clay Shiver	FS	Mike Minter	Mike Scurlock
RT	Chris Terry	Norberto Davidds-Garrido*	RC	Doug Evans	Jimmy Hitchcock

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Ken Walter	K	John Kasay

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Chicago BEARS

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

G.M. Mark Hatley is a quiet, unassuming personnel man who is putting together a pretty good young football team that, just two years ago, was probably the worst in the NFL in terms of athleticism and overall talent. He has a strong and trusted ally in college scouting director Bill Rees, and they appear to be in sync as far as overall philosophy and assessing their team's needs.

The Bears did a solid job the past two years of hitting on several draft picks—QB Cade McNown, S Tony Parrish, C Olin Kreutz and CB Jerry Azumah, a converted running back who was a late-round pick—and developing '97 draftee Marcus Robinson into a Pro Bowl-caliber receiver.

Although they are not close to being an elite team in terms of personnel, the Bears are getting better, but they will need at least two more solid drafts. In coach Dick Jauron's and offensive coordinator Gary Crowton's wide-open pass offense, they will emphasize speed at the skill positions. The coaching staff has moderate input into personnel decisions, but this is really Hatley's show, and final decisions rest with him.

TEAM NEEDS

WR: Re-signing Robinson was just the first step in assuring that McNown will have a strong supporting cast next season. But Bobby Engram is unlikely to be back, which would leave Eddie Kennison, a sometimes-adequate receiver, as the other starter. Marty Booker, who has loads of potential, must prove over an entire season he can adequately fill Curtis Conway's void. D'Wayne Bates must step up like the staff thinks he can for the spread offense to work effectively.

K: The three-headed monster of Jeff Jaeger, Chris Boniol and Jaret Holmes was a disaster last season, and the Bears can't afford to gamble in the kicking game if they expect to take the next step toward the playoffs. There are plenty of quality options in free agency.

FS: This shouldn't be a tough place to upgrade. Chris Hudson, the starter last year, played soft and didn't tackle well—two attributes Jauron won't stand for. The Bears need a physical free safety to line up next to Parrish, a rising star. Look for them to try to find one in free agency.

DE: The front office was adamant about acquiring an all-around player in free agency, and Hatley thinks ex-Seahawks DE Phillip Daniels is the answer. Daniels isn't dominant in any one area, but he is competent in every phase of the game. Aging Clyde Simmons served his purpose last season, but the Bears need to develop some young players on the edge. Bryan Robinson is a quality run-stuffer, but that's about it. The team tried Russell Davis outside last season, but he belongs at tackle.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

RB: The Bears seem stuck with former No. 1 draft pick Curtis Enis, who definitely is not a good fit for their current system. Enis runs hard but lacks the burst and breakaway ability this offense needs. With all of the spread formations the Bears use, Enis should have an easier time exploiting soft defensive fronts. Edgar Bennett's release leaves James Allen as the only other true running back who carried the ball last season. Depth is a huge concern at halfback and fullback.

OLB: This is another area where the team wants to infuse some young talent. Last year's draft brought some interesting players, such as Warrick Holdman and hybrid defensive end Rosevelt Colvin, but the Bears need more. The defensive scheme requires the linebackers to rush the passer, so look for the Bears to try to draft more athletes.

P: Special teams coach Keith Armstrong's tumultuous relationship with Todd Sauerbrun ensures the team will go in another direction next season. It has signed ex-Bucs camp casualty Aron Langley, who will get the first shot to earn the job. There are plenty of punters available if the Bears are willing to shell out the money.

CB: The Bears can score points in bunches, but they can't stop their opponents from scoring. The team's sagging pass rush makes this group have to hold its coverage far longer than it should. Walt Harris can be a top cover corner but has yet to demonstrate consistency. This position was a top need before the Bears bolstered their corp with free-agent signee Thomas Smith in the offseason. But depth is still a concern, as their next-best corner is Azumah, whose lack of size eventually will be exposed.

OUTLOOK

The Bears have the No. 9 pick overall, and they can go a variety of directions, including wide receiver, defensive end or outside linebacker. Although this likely will be a defensive pick—OLB Brian Urlacher would seem to fit their needs—it's not impossible that they would take a receiver such as Michigan State's Plaxico Burress if he were there.

Although they have Enis, a running back such as Alabama's Shaun Alexander—who catches the ball extremely well out of the backfield, which Enis does not—certainly would fit the Bears' offensive philosophy.

When you have as many needs as the Bears, you can get a quality player who fits a need. Hatley will look to maneuver to acquire additional picks.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Cade McNown	Jim Miller
FB	John Allred	Ty Hallock
RB	Curtis Enis	James Allen
WR	Marcus Robinson	D'Wayne Bates
WR	Bobby Engram*	Eddie Kennison
TE	Alonzo Mayes	Ryan Wetnight
LT	Blake Brockermeyer	Jerry Wisne
LG	Rex Tucker	Casey Wiegmann
C	Olin Kreutz	Casey Wiegmann
RG	Chris Villarrial	Greg Huntington*
RT	James Williams	Dan Palmer

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Aron Langley	K	Jaret Holmes

DEFENSE

LE	Bryan Robinson	Rosevelt Colvin
LT	Jim Flanigan	Chris Mims
RT	Mike Wells	Russell Davis
RE	Phillip Daniels	Clyde Simmons
LOLB	Warrick Holdman	Barry Minter
MLB	Barry Minter	Khari Samuel
ROLB	Sean Harris	Keith Burns
LC	Thomas Smith	Jerry Azumah
SS	Tony Parrish	Ray Austin
FS	Chris Hudson*	Frankie Smith
RC	Walt Harris	Terry Cousin

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Cincinnati BENGALS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

This is one of the most maligned front offices in the NFL, but it has earned that reputation thanks to a series of mistakes and bad seasons. The team appears to be light years behind most in structure and size. It has the smallest scouting department, and President/G.M. Mike Brown and brother Pete rely almost entirely on their coaching staff to make personnel decisions. Scouts in the organization are information gatherers who prepare reports for the coaches when the season begins. Coaches evaluate players, work them out and make draft-day decisions.

On one hand, having coaches pick players makes them accountable, but many coaches aren't good evaluators and don't always have an unbiased approach.

Because of their reputation for being tight-fisted, the Bengals struggle to attract quality free agents, although they consistently are under the salary cap. With coach Bruce Coslet and his staff on the hot seat, it will be interesting to see if the Bengals approach free agency and the draft looking for a short-term fix rather than a long-term plan. This team perennially picks at the top of the draft yet lacks the good players to show for it.

TEAM NEEDS

DE: Much has been made of Cincinnati's problems at cornerback, but the presence of an outside speed rusher would mask coverage problems. Last year's starters, Michael Bankston and John Copeland, combined for just 10 sacks. Vaughn Booker, an intense free agent recently signed from the Packers, will push for a starting role. The team's 3-4 alignment could be part of the problem, but better athletes would find their way to the quarterback.

CB: Cincinnati was hit hard by injury at this spot last year. Artrell Hawkins has the tools and attitude of a No. 1 corner, but he needs to gain confidence and gamble more. Chicago castoff Tom Carter impressed the coaching staff following his midseason arrival and will get a chance to earn a starting job. Team insiders aren't optimistic about Charles Fisher's knee injury. Aside from keeping Rodney Heath, who led the team with three interceptions, the Bengals should clean house.

DT: Oliver Gibson performed well his first season after arriving from Pittsburgh, but he doesn't have the girth to stack up the run and figures as a nickel tackle. The Bengals opted not to retain Kimo von Oelhoffen, who signed with the Steelers. The team believes Chiefs free agent Tom Barndt will be a better anchor in the middle.

S: Cory Hall grabbed the starting free safety job from Greg Myers last season, and the coaching staff is intrigued with his potential. Last year's starting strong safety, Myron Bell, won't be retained because of deficiencies in coverage. A more versatile option is needed. The range of the secondary is a weakness that must be addressed.

OT: The front office quickly accomplished one of its goals in free agency by re-signing starting tackle Rod Jones. Although a team never wants its quarterback running for his life, Akili Smith's mobility justifies keeping Jones on the left side. Willie Anderson is a Pro Bowl-caliber tackle who should anchor this line for years. Cincinnati could draft Alabama's Chris Samuels in the first round to ensure dominant play on the edges, but this team needs help in too many other areas.

WR: It's hard to understand why the organization has put up with Carl Pickens' antics. He has ideal size (6-2) but his production was eclipsed by his ego and Darnay Scott last season. Cincinnati's favorite malcontent isn't as good as he or the front office thinks. The departure of No. 3 option Willie Jackson leaves room for maneuvering.

QB: Last year's top pick, Smith, experienced the kind of growing pains all rookie passers endure, but he eventually should turn around the franchise. Scott Covington could battle for backup duties. With such youth, the Bengals need to find experience.

TE: Tony McGee re-signed with the team toward the end of last season, but the Bengals should start looking toward the future. Marco Battaglia never will be anything more than a decent reserve.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

COREY SIMON

OUTLOOK

One reward for finishing near the bottom is you select near the top of the draft. The Bengals likely will continue rebuilding their defense, which ranked near the bottom of the NFL in most categories. Florida State DT Corey Simon makes sense. He would upgrade the interior pass rush, especially if the team switches from a 3-4 to a 4-3 scheme. However, if Penn State DE Courtney Brown drops to No. 4, the Bengals might be tempted to grab him.

It's unlikely Cincinnati will trade up or down because the Bengals are assured of getting a quality defensive lineman at the No. 4 slot. Since this draft lacks a lot of franchise-type players, it's unlikely many teams will try to talk them into a draft-day deal.

If Cincinnati ends up choosing between Brown and Simon, it will be an interesting test of philosophy. While Brown likely will be the higher-graded player, Simon would fill a greater need.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Akili Smith	Scott Covington
FB	Clif Groce	Nick Williams
RB	Corey Dillon	Ki-Jana Carter
WR	Carl Pickens	Damon Griffin
WR	Darnay Scott	Craig Yeast
TE	Tony McGee	Marco Battaglia
LT	Rod Jones	Jamain Stephens
LG	Matt O'Dwyer	Mike Goff
C	Rich Braham	Brock Gutierrez
RG	Brian DeMarco	Tony Coats
RT	Willie Anderson	Mike Doughty

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Brad Costello	K	Doug Pelfrey

DEFENSE

LE	John Copeland	Andre Purvis
LT	Tom Barndt	Glen Steele
RT	Oliver Gibson	Glen Steele
RE	Vaughn Booker	Michael Bankston
LOLB	Steve Foley	Canute Curtis
MLB	Brian Simmons	Billy Granville
ROLB	Takeo Spikes	Reinard Wilson
LC	Tom Carter	Rodney Heath
SS	Cory Hall	Lawrence Wright
FS	Tremain Mack	
RC	Artrell Hawkins	Ty Howard

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Cleveland BROWNS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

It's a little tough to get a handle on the philosophy of the Browns because of their short existence. However, their front office is a reflection of the 49ers, where Carmen Policy, Dwight Clark and Joe Collins all formerly worked.

The Browns, who have a veteran scouting staff, commit more manpower than most teams to evaluating pro personnel, but not at the expense of college scouting. For a struggling team that lacks personnel, the Browns better know the league because they need to exploit every possible talent source. Because of their top selections, the draft is only the most visible one.

This team needs speed, athleticism and playmakers. Cleveland will look to upgrade its matchup capabilities while not sacrificing speed. The team has money to spend, but it must do so wisely—be it in free agency or the draft.

TEAM NEEDS

WR: If Peter Warrick isn't the team's No. 1 pick, something is wrong. The club is dedicated to Couch, but he won't get the job done without playmakers at receiver, and few guys can deliver like Warrick. Coach Chris Palmer's spread offense relies on speed on the perimeter, which Kevin Johnson provided last season. Couch is lobbying for the front office to take Warrick.

DE: The team's lack of a pass rush magnified its problems in the secondary. Most quarterbacks can pick apart defenses if given time, and opposing throwers had way too much of it last season. The Browns were disappointed they weren't able to sign free agents such as Simeon Rice and Tony Brackens. However, former Steeler Orpheus Roye will help.

DT: The fact Mike Thompson's 17 tackles were the second most by a tackle is embarrassing. Darius Holland's surprising play was a bonus, but this position was a disaster. The team needs a quick one-gap player who can penetrate. Give the Browns credit for recognizing early that Jerry Ball no longer can play.

LT: The February release of Lomas Brown was a setback. The young team can't afford this huge miscalculation by the personnel department. It's a miracle that Couch survived 56 sacks, and losing Brown won't help that. No one on the line is capable of holding up an entire season, and it's unlikely a solution will be found.

TE: With a young quarterback, this position is vital. Former 49er Irv Smith was brought in to be a safe stopgap, but his struggles compounded the team's offensive problems. A replacement is needed. Undrafted free agent Mark Campbell was a nice find, but he's no more than a backup.

RB: The Browns ended last season with Karim Abdul-Jabbar as the starter; a change is needed. Teams will continue teeing off on QB Tim Couch without the threat of a running game. Terry Kirby is a productive third-down option, but his struggles last season proved he's not the answer. The team hopes Errict Rhett, a free agent from the Ravens, will suffice for a season. He was inconsistent last year.

OLB: Jamir Miller proved to be the team's best pickup last offseason, but he needs help. With few options, the Browns were forced to press rookie Rahim Abdullah into the starting lineup. While he performed admirably, Cleveland doesn't want to enter next season with Abdullah as a starter—but it might have little choice.

CB: This position recorded just one interception a year ago with a group of proven veterans. It's difficult to be critical of the spot because of the lack of help it received from the front seven, but changes need to be made. Rookie Daylon McCutcheon was a great pick last April, but he's the only sure thing. Antonio Langham has been released, and free agent Ryan McNeil isn't expected back as a free agent.

OUTLOOK

The Browns are a young team that could go a lot of directions. With holes in the offensive and defensive lines, a lack of athleticism and speed and myriad matchup problems, the team could fill a need by picking a player at any position but quarterback.

It's likely the club will tab Florida State's Warrick. He appears to be the only impact player in the draft, although many teams don't like drafting a receiver No. 1. Warrick could team with Johnson and Couch to give the Browns big-play possibilities.

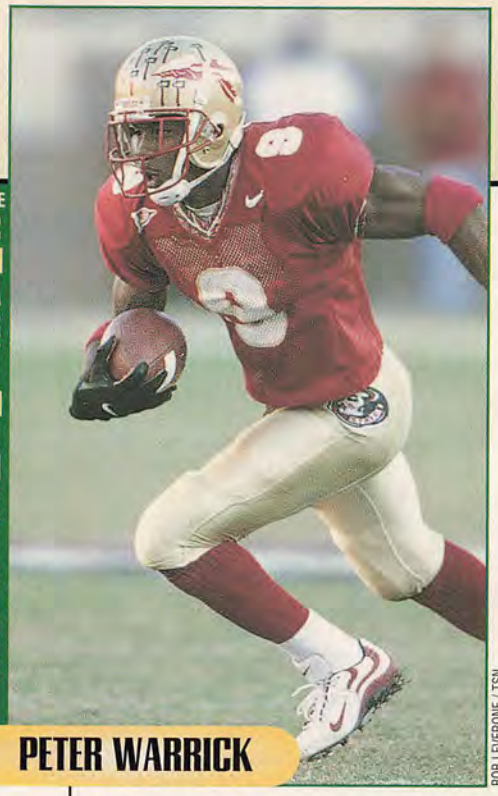
But the front office may be tempted to look for defensive help. Penn State's dynamic duo of DE Courtney Brown and OLB LaVar Arrington is enticing.

The team also may entertain offers for the No. 1 pick with the chance to obtain more selections. That makes sense for a team with lots of needs, but it's unlikely many clubs will want to trade into the No. 1 spot with no clear-cut franchise player available.

There will be lots of rumors and hype between now and draft day, but when it's all said and done, look for Cleveland to stay put and pick Warrick.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

THE SMART MONEY SAYS



PETER WARRICK

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE			DEFENSE		
QB	Tim Couch	Ty Detmer	LE	Orpheus Roye	Hurvin McCormack*
FB	Marc Edwards	Tarek Saleh	LT	Darrius Holland	Mike Thompson
RB	Errict Rhett	Terry Kirby	RT	Derrick Alexander	Stalin Colinet
WR	Kevin Johnson	Zola Davis	RE	Keith McKenzie	Arnold Miller
WR	Darrin Chiaverini	Damon Dunn	LOLB	Rahim Abdullah	Kendall Ogle
TE	Irv Smith*	James Dearth	MLB	Wali Rainer	James Williams*
LT	Steve Zahursky	Jeremy McKinney	ROLB	Jamir Miller	Lenoy Jones*
LG	Jim Pyne	Jim Bundren	LC	Corey Fuller	Raymond Jackson
C	Dave Wohlabaugh	Jim Bundren	SS	Marquis Smith	Earl Little
RG	Everett Lindsay	Chris Ruhman	FS	Percy Ellsworth	Marlon Forbes*
RT	Orlando Brown	Chris Ruhman	RC	Daylon McCutcheon	Raymond Jackson

SPECIAL TEAMS

P Chris Gardocki K Phil Dawson

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Dallas COWBOYS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

For all intents and purposes, owner Jerry Jones is the Cowboys' personnel director. He watches film, attends all-star games and workouts and takes pride in his ability to evaluate.

The Cowboys have an unusual front-office structure. There aren't a lot of highly visible or well-known personnel guys, but it is a veteran group that works well together. Also, the division of responsibilities is clear. Even though the Cowboys have had a head coaching change, with former defensive coordinator Dave Campo taking over for Chan Gailey, this staff has been together a long time and is close to Jones. As a result, the coaches are involved in draft decisions. The scouts are primarily information gatherers who don't have ultimate decision-making powers, but they and the coaches have respect for each other.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

CB: The secondary will take a huge hit if Deion Sanders doesn't return. His excellence forced opponents to use just half the field in the passing game and his departure would expose this group's inexperience. Dallas also could lose nickel back Charlie Williams, an unrestricted free agent. The team lacks cap room to sign a stud free-agent corner, so it may have to go with the underachieving Kevin Smith or Kevin Mathis in Sanders' spot.

WR: The team addressed this area by acquiring Joey Galloway, one of the game's best receivers. Rocket Ismail was a nice addition last season, but his contributions were offset by the emergence in Carolina of Patrick Jeffers—a player the team shouldn't have let get away. The Galloway-Ismail combination has big-play ability, but the team will miss fan-favorite Michael Irvin, a free agent who is a dependable possession receiver.

QB: Troy Aikman's career has been lengthened due to a superior pass-blocking line, but the club needs to start grooming a successor. With Jason Garrett gone to the Giants, Dallas desperately needs a backup for Aikman. At press time, Mike Quinn, the club's No. 3 quarterback in '99 and a long-range project, was listed as the backup.

DE: The team is confident former North Carolina bookends Greg Ellis and Ebenezer Ekuban will get the job done, but depth is a concern. The loss of underachiever Kavika Pittman leaves inexperienced Peppi Zellner the lone holdover. A steady veteran would be a nice addition.

TE: With a switch back to the offensive scheme that brought the team three Super Bowl titles in the 1990s, David LaFleur could post Jay Novacek-type numbers. The question is: Who fits into the team's double-tight end sets? Mike Lucky is a mammoth blocking specialist, but the team needs to find another competent receiver if Eric Bjornson leaves as a free agent.

FB: Daryl Johnston is gone and converted LB Robert Thomas, who started seven games at fullback in '99, is back. Thomas offers little as a receiver, which is important in Dallas' system, but he's a strong blocker. The club could use a solid backup.

FS: Re-signing George Teague was a top priority this offseason. But like Aikman, he can't go on forever. Teague continues to defy age (29) by consistently making plays, but he needs to start grooming an understudy. Omar Stoutmire appeared to be that guy before being let go last season.

K: Eddie Murray, who will be 44 in August, is reliable from around 40 yards but lacks the required range. Don't look for him to return. There are plenty of quality veteran free agents available, but it's unlikely the team will spend big money.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

ADALIUS THOMAS

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

OUTLOOK

With the acquisition of Galloway, which cost the Cowboys their first-round picks in 2000 and 2001, the brass must reshape its strategy. Galloway will be a huge upgrade for a receiving corps that needs big plays and explosiveness. However, this is an aging team with many needs. With only one selection on the first day of the draft, Dallas will have to be good—and lucky.

If tabbing a top corner is the No. 1 priority, the staff may have to hope at least one cover guy such as Tennessee's Dwayne Goodrich, Florida State's Mario Edwards or Ohio State's Ahmed Plummer drops to the Cowboys' first draft slot (No. 52). However, a more likely scenario is there will be a run on corners late in the first round and early in the second. That means Dallas could be looking to fill a big need without a quality player available.

Dallas could opt to tab a defensive end to upgrade its pass rush. There may be quality candidates to choose from in the middle of the second round, including Kansas State's Darren Howard, South Carolina's John Abraham and Southern Miss' Adalius Thomas.

Galloway will be a huge addition, but the Cowboys paid a heavy price to acquire him and will feel it on draft day.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Troy Aikman	Mike Quinn
FB	Robert Thomas	Ryan Neufeld
RB	Emmitt Smith	Chris Warren
WR	Joey Galloway	Jason Tucker
WR	Rocket Ismail	James McKnight
TE	David LaFleur	Mike Lucky
LT	Flozell Adams	Solomon Page
LG	Larry Allen	Ben Fricke
C	Mark Stepnoski	Tom Myslinski*
RG	Solomon Page	Tony Hutson
RT	Erik Williams	Solomon Page

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Toby Gowin	K

DEFENSE

LE	Greg Ellis	Peppi Zellner
LT	Chad Hennings	Brandon Noble
RT	Alonzo Spellman*	Leon Lett
RE	Ebenezer Ekuban	Michael Myers
LOLB	Darren Hambrick	Brandon Tolbert
MLB	Dat Nguyen	Brandon Tolbert
ROLB	Dexter Coakley	Brandon Tolbert
LC	Charlie Williams*	Kevin Smith
SS	Darren Woodson	Chris Akins
FS	George Teague*	Izell Reese
RC	Kevin Mathis	Duane Hawthorne

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Denver BRONCOS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The Broncos' front office lacks a strong identity but might be the best in the NFL. It goes about its job quietly, putting together a two-time Super Bowl champion in the '90s and continuing to build a team through free agency and the draft.

Coach Mike Shanahan is a hands-on type in personnel decisions, but he accepts input from all of his coaches and scouts. Like Bill Walsh, he makes good decisions and sees the big picture when he has the proper information.

The Broncos have picked low in the first round in recent years because of their on-field success. Accordingly, it has been difficult for the front office to maintain the quality of Denver's roster. Also, the team's winning ways have resulted in an escalating payroll, making it tougher to retain top-echelon talent.

Denver must draft effectively in the next few years because salary-cap restrictions will make it hard for the Broncos to make significant free-agent signings.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

SS: Tyrone Braxton's retirement means Darrius Johnson will be pressed into the lineup, and Johnson isn't what the team is looking for in physical play—especially run support. Ideally, he would play only in nickel situations.

WR: When will the Broncos get a third receiver to diversify their passing game? Futile attempts in the past (such as the drafting of Marcus Nash) have handcuffed coordinator Gary Kubiak. The loss of tight end Shannon Sharpe places greater emphasis on the wideouts because neither Byron Chamberlain nor Dwayne Carswell can be flexed out wide to create mismatches the way Sharpe could. Travis McGriff will get a long look in training camp, but the backups to Ed McCaffrey and Rod Smith likely will be Andre Cooper and Billy Miller.

QB: The Broncos remain high on Brian Griese, but Shanahan would like an established veteran as an option. Bubby Brister's inability to reconcile with Shanahan appears to remove him from the picture, and Chris Miller was forced to retire again after more concussion problems. Denver will be unstable if it fails to get insurance for Griese.

DE: By releasing Alfred Williams and Neil Smith to clear cap room, the Broncos left themselves thin on the edges. They then made a couple of free-agent signings in an effort to replenish the position. Maa Tanuvasa is a steady starter on one side, but the front office made an uncustomary reach when it signed Kavika Pittman to a lucrative deal. A huge disappointment in Dallas, Pittman probably will do little of note in Denver. But the Broncos also signed Lester Archambeau, a starter for Atlanta most of the past seven seasons. Second-year man Montae Reagor is a pure speed rusher who doesn't hold up well against the run.

G: Mark Schlereth will return for one final playoff run, and Dan Neil is solid on the right side, meaning a starter isn't an immediate concern. Still, the Broncos badly need backup help. There are young, inexperienced players on the roster (Chris Banks, Lennie Friedman), but the coaching staff isn't sure any of them can play.

DT: Trevor Pryce's breakout year didn't surprise anyone. The problem is that Pryce is the team's only inside rush threat. Keith Traylor is a nice run-stuffer, but he needs to be in a platoon system with a complementary one-gap player. Denver has no depth here.

CB: Last season, starters Ray Crockett and Dale Carter made fewer plays than usual. Still, they rate as one of the NFL's top cover combinations. The loss of nickel back Tory James will hurt because young-ster Chris Watson isn't ready to assume an expanded role.

TE: It will take Chamberlain and Carswell to replace Sharpe, with Chamberlain cast as the receiver and Carswell as the blocker. Even without Sharpe, the Broncos are better off at this position than many teams.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

DEON GRANT

OUTLOOK

Although they finished last in the AFC West last season with a 6-10 record, the Broncos don't have many holes to fill. The return of Terrell Davis, who rushed for 2,008 yards in 1998 before going down with a torn ACL four games into the '99 season, and the maturation of Griese should put Denver right back in the playoff race. A fifth-place schedule will help, too.

The possible acquisition of 49ers QB Steve Young would place a huge emphasis on immediate success—and quite possibly influence the team's draft strategy. Still, going with the assumption that Griese will open the season under center, the team would be hard-pressed to pass on Miami (Fla.) TE Bubba Franks if he were available with the No. 10 selection. Franks is a logical successor to Sharpe, and Griese has a history of relying on his tight end for production underneath.

Alabama's Chris Samuels has rare ability and could be plugged in immediately at left tackle, but the expected return of a healthy Tony Jones lessens the urgency there.

With Pittman and Archambeau in tow, the defense may be in position to select the best available athlete. If Denver chooses that path, Tennessee S Deon Grant may be the Broncos' man. He would solidify the secondary, provide a big-play threat and combat foes' vertical passing game.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Brian Griese	Bubby Brister
FB	Howard Griffith	Detron Smith
RB	Terrell Davis	Olandis Gary
WR	Ed McCaffrey	Andre Cooper
WR	Rod Smith	Billy Miller
TE	Dwayne Carswell	Byron Chamberlain
LT	Tony Jones	Trey Teague
LG	Mark Schlereth	Lennie Friedman
C	Tom Nalen	K.C. Jones
RG	Dan Neil	Chris Banks
RT	Matt Lepsis	Trey Teague

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Tom Rouen	K	Jason Elam

DEFENSE

LE	Kavika Pittman	Harald Hasselbach
LT	Keith Traylor	Nathan Davis
RT	Trevor Pryce	Nathan Davis
RE	Maa Tanuvasa	Lester Archambeau
LOLB	Glenn Cadrez	Nate Wayne
MLB	Al Wilson	Steve Russ
ROLB	Bill Romanowski	Chris Gizzi
LC	Ray Crockett	Chris Watson
SS	Darrius Johnson	Jason Moore
FS	Eric Brown	George Coghill
RC	Dale Carter	Jeremy Lincoln

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Detroit LIONS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The Lions are not a gambling organization on draft day. They are methodical and organized when they stack their board, and they usually stay true to their grading system. They don't make a lot of risky picks; instead, they simply take the best player who hopefully fits a need. They seem to be doing an excellent job of matching value and need, especially in the top rounds. In the past few years, they have selected solid starters such as DT Luther Elliss, CBs Bryant Westbrook and Terry Fair and OLB Chris Claiborne, and they stole QB Charlie Batch in the second round ('98).

G.M. Chuck Schmidt is well-respected in NFL circles, but he oversees the front office and is not always actively involved as a talent evaluator and day-to-day decision-maker. However, the Lions have a strong scouting department led by V.P. of player personnel Ron Hughes and pro personnel director Kevin Colbert. Coach Bobby Ross and his staff have a solid working relationship with the scouting department, and although Ross has the reputation of being somewhat stubborn, it appears the decisions made by the Lions on draft day are group decisions.

TEAM NEEDS

OT: Injuries on the offensive line killed the team last year, and the hangover effect could linger into this season. LT Ray Roberts' status is clouded, and he wasn't overly consistent when at full strength. No. 1 pick Aaron Gibson, who sat out his entire rookie season with a shoulder injury, should help solidify the right side, at tackle or guard. After those two, the cupboard is empty. Barrett Brooks is a decent swing tackle, but the team should give up on Tony Ramirez and Juan Roque. Both players are too stiff to get the job done.

DE: The team's main offseason objective was to retain Robert Porcher, arguably the top all-around end in the NFL. Tracy Scroggins is a perfect fit as a nickel speed rusher, but he has been pressed into full-time duty the past few years. The Lions hope Jared DeVries can step in on first and second down and provide solid run support, but the depth ends there.

QB: Batch gets mixed reviews from scouts, but we believe he's the answer. His only problem has been injuries. Backup Gus Frerotte was a nice pickup last season, and the Lions were hopeful they could retain him. If not, they need someone comparable to replace him. No. 3 QB Cory Sauter should do nothing but hold a clipboard.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

CB: Detroit's corners struggled badly last season because too many second- and third-tier players were forced into significant roles because of injuries. Westbrook still has a chance to be a good one, but he must overcome confidence problems. The healthy returns of Fair and Kevin Abrams should help, but both lack the size to compete in a division dominated by big receivers.

C: Mike Compton is a tough competitor, but the experiment with him at center last season only prolonged the team's search. Finding a true center would allow Compton to move back to guard, his natural position.

FS: The team desperately wanted Mark Carrier to return, but he bolted to the Redskins. Instead, the Lions signed Bills free agent Kurt Schulz, who should bring the same physical presence to the secondary that Carrier did. Special teams ace Lamar Campbell is a long-range project.

RB: The Lions didn't need to find another Barry Sanders, just someone to keep defenses honest—something neither Greg Hill nor Ron Rivers did last season. They overpaid for Jaguars free agent James Stewart, but he gives them a versatile, move-the-chains runner. The days of FB Cory Schlesinger lining up in a one-back set will be nothing more than a bad memory for Lions fans.

WR: When Herman Moore is at full strength, the Lions arguably have the top receiving trio in the NFL. Germane Crowell is another outstanding deep threat to complement Johnnie Morton, and Brian Stablein is a quality No. 4 guy. The Lions should look for a project-type athlete late in the draft.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

CHRIS McINTOSH

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

OUTLOOK

The acquisition of Stewart addressed the team's need at running back and will allow the Lions to try to improve their offense up front. They would like to move Gibson from tackle to guard. Selecting a tackle such as Wisconsin's Chris McIntosh with the 20th pick would allow them to do that. Teaming McIntosh with Gibson would give the Lions a powerful, run-blocking "Badger Connection" on the right side.

If a player such as Tennessee S Deon Grant would happen to drop to the Lions, he certainly would be a possibility. A lot depends on what happens with Sanders. If the Lions are able to trade him and get quality compensation, it could load them up with draft picks and put them in a better position to get the players they want.

Remember, this isn't an organization that makes a lot of rash moves on draft day. The Lions are conservative and confident in what they do, and they do not waver.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Charlie Batch	Gus Frerotte*
FB	Corey Schlesinger	Brock Olivo
RB	James Stewart	Sedrick Irvin
WR	Johnnie Morton	Brian Stablein
WR	Herman Moore	Germane Crowell
TE	David Sloan	Walter Rasby
LT	Ray Roberts	Tony Ramirez
LG	Tony Semple	Kerwin Blaise
C	Mike Compton	Eric Beverly
RG	Jeff Hartings	Juan Roque
RT	Aaron Gibson	Barrett Brooks

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	John Jett	K	Jason Hanson

DEFENSE

LE	Robert Porcher	Mike Pringley
LT	Luther Elliss	Travis Kirschke
RT	James Jones	Kelvin Pritchett*
RE	Tracy Scroggins	Jared DeVries
LOLB	Chris Claiborne	Scott Kowalkowski*
MLB	Stephen Boyd	Richard Jordan
ROLB	Allen Aldridge	Clint Kriewaldt
LC	Bryant Westbrook	Kevin Abrams
SS	Ron Rice	Corwin Brown*
FS	Kurt Schulz	Lamar Campbell
RC	Terry Fair	Robert Bailey*

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Green Bay PACKERS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The Packers have done a good job in recent years of focusing on need and attacking the draft. As an example, they needed to upgrade their secondary last year, so they drafted Antuan Edwards, Fred Vinson and Mike McKenzie 1-2-3—and now they have their cover corners of the future. They also have done a good job in the middle and late rounds, finding such gems as RB Dorsey Levens (fifth), TE Mark Chmura (sixth) and WR Corey Bradford (fifth). However, advancing age and salary-cap problems will make it difficult for the Packers to be huge participants in free agency, and they may be limited in their ability to keep some aging veterans.

Green Bay is in a transition period, and G.M. Ron Wolf may have the biggest challenge of his career trying to keep this organization on top. Wolf runs the organization with a strong hand and is responsible for every decision in terms of personnel acquisitions. Wolf attracted longtime friend and personnel expert Ken Herock from the Raiders last year, and they have a strong working relationship and understanding of what the organization needs.

New head coach Mike Sherman and his staff will have moderate input into personnel decisions. It won't be remotely close to the power former coach Mike Holmgren and his staff had.

TEAM NEEDS

DE: With Keith McKenzie gone, the Packers are left with John Thierry and Vonnie Holliday, and many people inside the organization think he's a better fit at tackle. The third-round miscalculation on Jonathan Brown in '98 is coming back to haunt the Packers. The team is high on athletic Cletidus Hunt, but he's another player who figures at tackle.

OLB: The loss of Brian Williams last season crippled the defense and further exposed the lack of playmakers at linebacker. George Koonce is a physical leader, but his athletic limitations forced him to the bench at season's end. The Packers hope that after a year's worth of seasoning, Jude Waddy simply can react and fly to the ball. If Williams' knee injury slows him a step, it will be disastrous.

S: LeRoy Butler was a shadow of his former self last season, but he didn't get many chances to do what he does best—blitz. If he dedicates himself in the offseason, as he vowed, this need won't be as glaring. The biggest disappointment in '99 was the play of FS Darren Sharper, who repeatedly took poor angles and surrendered big plays. The team is thinking about switching Sharper to cornerback and putting someone else at free safety.

WR: The team felt the ripple effect of Antonio Freeman's prolonged contract holdout all season because the former elite receiver made few big plays. Bill Schroeder had a nice season, but ideally he would be nothing more than an exciting third receiver. Team insiders think Bradford still is a year or two away from making a consistent impact. The team needs to add an established receiver, not another former track star-turned-football player.

C: Starter Frank Winters was all but gone before Sherman was hired, but Sherman was smart enough to realize Winters' importance to the team and QB Brett Favre, his buddy. Winters has at least another year or two of solid play left. Mike Flanagan is an intriguing backup, but he has never tested his mettle in the regular season.

OT: There are plenty of bodies, but none appears hungry enough to stake claim to the left tackle job. Ross Verba's play has slipped since his rookie season ('97), and the team is contemplating moving him to guard. Athletic Mike Wahle got some experience last season, and the team is encouraged by his rapid progress. Earl Dotson's back problems continue to hamper his mobility and could affect the long-range outlook at right tackle.

QB: Although Favre continues to defy the odds and line up every week, his durability leaves questions about his backups unanswered. Matt Hasselbeck set the league on fire in the preseason, but those games don't count. Aaron Brooks will return as the No. 3 quarterback, but some doubt his ability to read defenses.

MLB: Bernardo Harris picks up his lunch pail and goes to work every week, but the Packers might need more than a blue-collar guy in the middle. Would he make more impact plays if he were surrounded with better talent? That's a question only Wolf can answer.

OUTLOOK

The Packers are an aging team that could go in a lot of directions on draft day. They have problems in the offensive line (age and injuries), and they are missing a home-run receiver to go along with Freeman. However, look for them to concentrate on defense early in the draft; they must upgrade their speed and athleticism off the edge.

A pass rusher such as Tennessee DE Shaun Ellis or Virginia Tech DE John Engelberger would be a nice complement to Holliday, but they also could look at an outside linebacker such as Tennessee's Raynoch Thompson or New Mexico's Brian Urlacher.

Look for the Packers to come out of the first two rounds with an impact defensive player and a speed wide receiver, although not necessarily in that order. This does not appear to be a draft that will force them to make a lot of moves up or down, so expect them to stay where they are and select the best available player.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

SHAUN ELLIS

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Brett Favre	Matt Hasselbeck
FB	William Henderson	Matt Snider
RB	Dorsey Levens	Basil Mitchell
WR	Antonio Freeman	Donald Driver
WR	Bill Schroeder	Corey Bradford
TE	Mark Chmura	Jeff Thomason
LT	Mike Wahle	Ross Verba
LG	Ross Verba	Raleigh McKenzie
C	Frank Winters*	Mike Flanagan
RG	Marco Rivera	Joe Andruzzi
RT	Earl Dotson	Scott Curry

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Josh Bidwell	K	Ryan Longwell

DEFENSE

LE	John Thierry	David Bowens
LT	Santana Dotson	Jermaine Smith
RT	Cletidus Hunt	Bill Lyon
RE	Vonnie Holliday	Jon Harris
LOLB	George Koonce	Kivuusama Mays
MLB	Bernardo Harris	Jim Nelson
ROLB	Brian Williams	Jude Waddy
LC	Mike McKenzie	Antuan Edwards
SS	LeRoy Butler	Scott McGarrahan
FS	Darren Sharper	Antuan Edwards
RC	Tyrone Williams	Fred Vinson

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Indianapolis COLTS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Bill Polian has earned his reputation as one of the top executives in NFL history by turning the hapless Colts into Super Bowl contenders. He previously resurrected Buffalo's program and launched the one in Carolina.

A year ago, Polian realized his defensive team speed and matchup capabilities weren't up to par, so he brought in five new starters via free agency and the draft. Polian loves character and toughness but won't sacrifice speed and athleticism. As a result, the Colts are becoming a great matchup team.

His top aide is director of football operations Dom Anile. Polian and Anile combine to make all personnel decisions. The Colts have a solid scouting staff that gathers information and has moderate input—along with the coaches—into the draft.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

Indianapolis has seven starters from the last three drafts, including QB Peyton Manning and RB Edgerrin James. The Colts' front office may know its personnel better than any other group in the league. As a result, the Colts know how to remedy their weaknesses.

TEAM NEEDS

LDE: The Colts had hoped Shawn King would anchor the position after signing him last offseason, but off-field problems resulted in his release. Chad Bratzke was better than advertised on the right side and the team needs to find a complement to prevent opponents from using a tight end exclusively on his side.

MLB: As was the case with King, Indianapolis thought it had filled this need last offseason. Although Michael Barber finished third on the team in tackles, his production didn't match the team's expectations and he was released. Jeff Brady, another '99 signee, is coming off a major knee injury that could detract from his already-limited range. Finding an athletic, rangy option is one of Polian's top priorities.

DT: Take away Ellis Johnson and this group's talent level is substandard. Larry Chester is just a stop-gap run-stuffer, and Tony McCoy's production has slipped badly due to injuries. The Colts need to add active bodies to create competition.

CB: The Colts were lucky to have the success they did a year ago without benefit of a playmaking secondary. The team's 10 interceptions were a reflection of the unit's limited athletic ability. The coaching staff is comfortable with Jeff Burris at one corner but feels Tyrone Poole, because of his small size, is better suited for a nickel role.

S: Chad Cota's strong ball skills were non-apparent last season. In fact, Indianapolis' safety corps was the only group in the league that did not record an interception. While the Colts are confident Cota will make more plays, they would like to add a free safety with more range than hard-hitting Jason Belser. Backup Billy Austin lacks cover skills to contribute in passing situations.

C: Larry Moore made the move from guard to center last season and started all 16 games. The switch made sense because Moore is an excellent hand-to-hand combatant. The more traffic he's in, the better. However, the former undrafted free agent has limited range. An athletic upgrade would allow the Colts to pull more and improve their screen game with James.

OLB: Mike Peterson proved to be another Polian gem. The rookie ranked second on the team in tackles and made lots of plays in space. With Cornelius Bennett entering his 14th season, the Colts must search for quality youngsters. Bert Berry assumed a starting role when Bennett was injured late last season, but is more of a pass rusher since he lacks bulk.

WR: Although they have TEs Ken Dilger and Marcus Pollard to go over the middle, the Colts could use a big, physical receiver to work underneath routes and in the red zone. Marvin Harrison, Jerome Pathon and Terrence Wilkins are quality options but are the same type of receiver—speedsters who make things happen in the open field. Lake Dawson wasn't the answer.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

TOM HAUCK / ALLSPORT

ROB MORRIS

OUTLOOK

Indianapolis is a young team that has gotten good in a hurry. As a result of astute personnel acquisitions, the Colts don't have a lot of pressing needs, but look for them to concentrate on defense for the second year in a row as they continue to upgrade speed and athleticism.

With the 28th pick, a defensive tackle would make sense. The Colts are looking for a guy to team with Johnson to give the team an inside push. Tennessee's Darwin Walker is a solid inside penetrator who could fit, but the Colts also are looking for a left defensive end who would team with Bratzke to upgrade the rush. Taking a middle linebacker also is possible. If BYU's Rob Morris is available, the Colts may nab him. He would be a big, physical presence.

The club is close to being in position to take the best athlete available regardless of need. But the Colts probably will opt for defense—at least in the first few rounds.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Peyton Manning	Kelly Holcomb
FB	Paul Shields	Scott Greene*
RB	Edgerrin James	Keith Elias*
WR	Marvin Harrison	Jerome Pathon
WR	Terrence Wilkins	E.G. Green
TE	Ken Dilger	Marcus Pollard
LT	Tarik Glenn	Jamie Wilson
LG	Steve McKinney	Jeff Saturday
C	Larry Moore	Jason Johnson
RG	Waverly Jackson	
RT	Adam Meadows	Trey Sartin

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Hunter Smith	K	Mike Vanderjagt

DEFENSE

LE	Bernard Whittington	Mark Thomas
LT	Tony McCoy	Larry Chester
RT	Ellis Johnson	Shane Bonham*
RE	Chad Bratzke	Brad Scioli
LOLB	Mike Peterson	Ratcliff Thomas
MLB	Jeff Brady*	Spencer Reid
ROLB	Cornelius Bennett	Bert Berry
LC	Jeff Burris	Tony Blevins
SS	Chad Cota	Eric Smedley*
FS	Jason Belser	Billy Austin
RC	Tyrone Poole	Steve Muhammad

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Jacksonville JAGUARS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

This is the NFL's best front office. The Jaguars may manage the salary cap better than any other club, and they do a great job anticipating problems and roster moves. The team has a strong philosophy and system in place and coach Tom Coughlin, who makes final decisions, ensures that the team adheres to them.

Coughlin has an excellent staff, including vice president of football operations Michael Huyghue, who always gets draft picks to training camp on time. Another top aide is Rick Reiprish, who runs the personnel department.

Jacksonville makes few personnel mistakes and does a tremendous job in free agency and the draft. This is an organization that puts a premium on speed and athletic ability. Every acquisition is done with the idea of how players will match up. Coughlin involves his coaching staff in evaluations.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

LDE: The Jags used the franchise tag to keep Tony Brackens, but they still have a hole on the left side. Renaldo Wynn wasn't productive, and Joel Smeenge produces in passing situations but is on the downside of his career. The team needs an every-down complement to Brackens.

G: With Zach Wiegert inked for the long term, the right side is OK. But the left side is shaky. The team wants an upgrade from Rich Tylski (who signed with Pittsburgh), and the front office is concerned it will lose free agent Ben Coleman. Whomever they get, the Jaguars need a mobile player who can lead for RB Fred Taylor.

OLB: Bryce Paup never was a good fit. The team rarely let him put his hand on the ground and rush, and he never developed coverage skills. With a versatile athlete such as Kevin Hardy on the other side, the Jags need to infuse a young player with speed opposite him.

WR: It's hard to argue with the deep and intermediate production of Jimmy Smith and Keenan McCardell, but the coaching staff was disappointed with Reggie Barlow's contributions in multiple-receiver sets. Barlow's lack of production forced too much of the offense to funnel through TE Kyle Brady. The Jaguars must decide whether to stick with Barlow or find an effective third option.

TE: Brady was used more in the passing game out of necessity because of the team's lack of an effective No. 3 receiver. Brady is at his best when he can concentrate on blocking. Backup Damon Jones did damage in the red zone, but his inability to prepare concerns the staff.

CB: Jacksonville must have foresight in regard to the future of its secondary, considering the AFC Central is loaded with top talent at quarterback. Every team but Pittsburgh has a young gun capable of taking over games.

C: John Wade wrestled the starting job from Quentin Neujahr in training camp and looked more polished than he did as a rookie. At 6-5, Wade is taller than most teams would like, but he's a strong guy who can be dominant when he gets his hands on an opponent. With few other need areas, the Jags may add a versatile backup who can play center and guard.

MLB: Lonnie Marts made a smooth transition to the middle last season after spending most of his NFL career on the outside with the Chiefs, Buccaneers and Titans. But the signing of Tampa Bay free agent Hardy Nickerson means Marts can move back outside. Nickerson is an athletic option who can make plays. That's good, because the club isn't high on Bryan Schwartz or Tom McManus, free agents who figure to depart.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

JULIAN PETERSON

PAUL NISELY / TSN

OUTLOOK

Once again, Jacksonville finds itself near the bottom of the first round with the 29th pick. For a team that went 14-2, the Jaguars have work to do. Jacksonville's record is partly a reflection of playing in the pathetic AFC Central, where they were able to outscore most foes.

If Coughlin chooses to add more offense, look for the team to draft a receiver. There are a handful of potential impact players who could be available when Jacksonville picks, including Georgia Tech's Dez White, Jackson State's Sylvester Morris and Florida State problem child Laveranues Coles. Any one of those guys would enable the Jags to spread the field and open running lanes for Taylor. This offense easily could be the Vikings or Rams of the 2000 season.

Defensively, Jacksonville has few needs. After coming to an agreement with free-agent cornerback Aaron Beasley, the secondary again should be strong. And Nickerson shores up the middle. The only weak spot is outside linebacker, where the Jaguars need a more versatile player than Paup. If available, Michigan State's Julian Peterson would be an outstanding pick.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Mark Brunell	Jamie Martin
FB	Daimon Shelton	Stacey Mack
RB	Fred Taylor	Tavian Banks
WR	Jimmy Smith	Alvin Whitted
WR	Keenan McCardell	Reggie Barlow
TE	Kyle Brady	Damon Jones
LT	Tony Boselli	Ben Coleman*
LG	Steve Ingram	Anthony Cesario
C	John Wade	Quentin Neujahr
RG	Zach Wiegert	Quentin Neujahr
RT	Leon Searcy	Steve Ingram

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Bryan Barker	K	Mike Hollis

DEFENSE

LE	Joel Smeenge	Eric Curry
LT	Seth Payne	Larry Smith
RT	Gary Walker	Larry Smith
RE	Tony Brackens	
LOLB	Kevin Hardy	Brant Boyer
MLB	Hardy Nickerson	Tom McManus*
ROLB	Lonnie Marts	Corey Terry
LC	Fernando Bryant	Dave Thomas*
SS	Donovin Darius	Rayna Stewart*
FS	Carnell Lake	Blaine McElmurry
RC	Aaron Beasley	Jason Craft

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Kansas City CHIEFS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Although the Chiefs went through a coaching change before last season, it has not caused major changes in their overall draft philosophy. Under personnel director Terry Bradway, the team has done a solid job in the draft and filling needs with veteran free agents. Bradway is a rising star, and he seems to have an excellent relationship with team president Carl Peterson, coach Gunther Cunningham and the entire staff.

Cunningham and his predecessor, Marty Schottenheimer, have placed a premium on toughness and production. But that philosophy can tempt you to load your roster with great effort players who lack athleticism, and that can lead to severe matchup problems. Cunningham, like Schottenheimer, loves the personnel side of the business and is actively involved in all player acquisitions. He watches a lot of film, works out a lot of players and, on the surface at least, seems to enjoy the draft process.

The coaches and scouts get along well in this team system, and the assistant coaches have substantial input, even on draft picks. Because of the rapport between the coaching staff and front office, morale is high and everybody seems to work together. Peterson doesn't attend a lot of workouts or watch a lot of film, but he gathers all the information, analyzes it and gets a great feel for the big picture.

TEAM NEEDS

OLB: The death of Derrick Thomas created a huge hole on the outside. Gary Stills could emerge as a serviceable edge rusher, but he has limitations. Donnie Edwards was a big-play machine after moving from the middle, but the Chiefs still must find someone who can play over the tight end. The alternative probably would be Ron George.

CB: The personnel department is not comfortable with the geriatric-like status at cornerback and will look to get younger in the draft. James Hasty and Cris Dishman both are entering their 13th seasons, and Eric Warfield is the only other capable cover man on the roster. Hasty and Dishman returned three of their 12 interceptions for touchdowns last season, but that type of production won't last forever.

RB: Re-signing fullback Tony Richardson was a prudent move, but the team still needs a reliable feature back. Kimble Anders is coming off a major knee injury and Bam Morris abruptly retired, leaving Donnell Bennett, Mike Cloud and Rashaan Shehee. The staff, understandably, has mixed emotions about this group in a ball-control offense.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

LDE: The Chiefs can get by with Eric Hicks, but they would like someone who can hold up better against the run. Hicks shows good straight-line speed off the edge and would fit better as a spot player. With Thomas gone, the team needs to get more from both ends.

S: Both Jerome Woods and Reggie Tongue were unrestricted free agents and the Chiefs worked hard to keep Woods, allowing Tongue to sign with Seattle. They regained Woods' anticipation and cover skills, but now they must replace Tongue's versatility and playmaking ability.

G: Peterson didn't take any chances with Will Shields. He slapped him with the franchise tag and ensured interior-line stability. Dave Szott is 32 and utilityman Jeff Smith, a free agent who may be re-signed, is the only capable backup. The Chiefs have used their top picks in each of the last two drafts on tackles and now they must look inside.

K: Pete Stoyanovich remains reliable in the clutch, but his leg strength is deteriorating.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

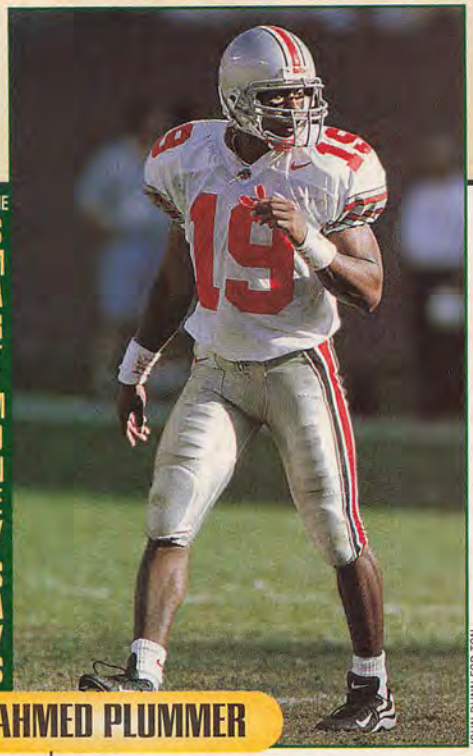
	OFFENSE		DEFENSE		
QB	Elvis Grbac	Warren Moon	LE	Eric Hicks	John Browning
FB	Tony Richardson	Donnell Bennett	LT	Chester McGlockton	Steve Martin
RB	Kimble Anders	Mike Cloud	RT	Dan Williams	Steve Martin
WR	Andre Rison	Kevin Lockett	RE	Leslie O'Neal	Mark Word
WR	Derrick Alexander	Larry Parker	LOLB	Ron George	Gary Stills
TE	Tony Gonzalez	Mitch Jacoby	MLB	Marvcus Patton	Mike Maslowski
LT	John Tait	Marcus Spears	ROLB	Donnie Edwards	Gary Stills
LG	Dave Szott	Jeff Smith*	LC	Cris Dishman	Carlton Gray
C	Tim Grunhard	Jeff Smith*	SS	Larry Atkins	Bracey Walker
RG	Will Shields	Brad Kubik	FS	Jerome Woods	Bracey Walker
RT	Victor Riley	Marcus Spears	RC	James Hasty	Eric Warfield

SPECIAL TEAMS

P Daniel Pope K Pete Stoyanovich

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS



JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

AHMED PLUMMER

His inability to kick off forced the organization to scramble at midseason and hold open auditions. Using a roster spot for a designated kickoff man is not something the Chiefs want to do again. Finding a punter who can double on kickoffs is an option.

WR: The passing game is designed for tight end Tony Gonzalez, but the Chiefs need another perimeter playmaker to complement the vertical threat of Derrick Alexander. Andre Rison is trying to hold on and Kevin Lockett is an underneath possession guy. Joe Horn's defection to New Orleans was a tough loss.

OUTLOOK

The Chiefs narrowly missed the 1999 playoffs and were rewarded with a marginal first-round pick. Selecting 21st, Peterson will have a tough time finding an impact player for his defense. With the loss of Thomas and the free-agent defection of Tongue leaving gaping holes on the perimeter and in the secondary, members of the scouting staff also are faced with addressing the team's aging cornerback situation.

Because one need is no more pressing than the next, Peterson probably will go for the best available defensive athlete, regardless of position. If New Mexico's Brian Urlacher slips, he would bring some nice versatility to the field, as would Julian Peterson of Michigan State. There aren't many "sure things" at the cornerback position, but Ohio State's Ahmed Plummer would be a nice fit, and Tennessee's Dwayne Goodrich and Jackson State's Rashard Anderson are other options. Plummer, like Goodrich, does not have ideal size, but both have the instincts to match up in man coverage. At 6-2, Anderson possesses rare cornerback size and good speed, but he's a gamble this high in the draft.

Miami DOLPHINS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The front office structure is up in the air after the retirement of Jimmy Johnson, who was the most hands-on coach in the NFL with player acquisitions. With Dave Wannstedt now in charge, the team could change philosophy. After the season, there was speculation the Dolphins would bring in a personnel director to work with Bob Ackles, who was Johnson's right-hand man for years. Miami might look for somebody after the draft to run the personnel department.

This is a veteran group. Ackles is great at overseeing all aspects of the organization, but both pro personnel director Tom Heckert and college scouting director Tom Braatz are close to retirement, and the team might want an infusion of new ideas and philosophies. Johnson included everybody in the draft process, which was great for morale, and he only made decisions after a great deal of input.

Miami's emphasis the past several years has been on speed and athletic ability, especially on defense. As a result, this is a very quick and solid matchup team. Whether Wannstedt can handle the draft as well as his predecessor is not certain. Johnson was a gambler on draft day and was not afraid to play a hunch. Although Wannstedt was schooled in Johnson's personnel philosophy, he did not always draft players in Chicago with speed and athleticism. This has been an offseason of change for Miami in the front office. Wannstedt steps into a tough role, but he is surrounded by good people.

TEAM NEEDS

G: Kevin Gogan was released, and Kevin Donnalley is aging. That left Mark Dixon as the only young player on the roster until the team signed Heath Irwin. The team hopes it can avoid going through another season with a platoon system.

TE: Cap casualty Troy Drayton is a big loss because Miami does not have an effective receiving tight end to replace him. Hunter Goodwin caught only eight passes last season, but he could start in 2000. This is definitely an area Miami will target in the draft.

QB: Damon Huard, Jay Fiedler and Jim Druckenmiller. Heading into the draft, these are the options at quarterback. The Dolphins do not have the cap room to go after an impact free agent, so they probably will stick with Huard. Marino's former backup may not be the reason the team wins many games, but he will not be the reason it loses many either.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

WR: Tony Martin turned out to be one of last year's best pickups with a 1,000-yard season in his return to Miami. Oronde Gadsden is a top red-zone threat, and O.J. McDuffie works intermediate routes well, but this group could use more speed. The team needs to bring in young players to push guys such as Yatil Green and Nate Jacquet.

S: The team is set at free safety with Brock Marion, but the Dolphins would like to upgrade at strong safety, where both Calvin Jackson and Shawn Wooden started last season. Neither incumbent was solid enough in coverage, and they are likely to leave in free agency. Brian Walker, with the Dolphins two years ago, returns from Seattle, but he is more of a free safety.

P: The Dolphins will go in a different direction than a year ago, letting Tommy Hutton leave in free agency. His hang time was solid, but he struggled with directional kicks. Some solid free agents are available, and this position is not a high priority.

RB: Despite making this position its main focus last year, Miami still has not solved its running woes. J.J. Johnson has potential, but he never hit his stride because of injuries. Cecil Collins' well-documented personal problems led to his release, leaving few backup options. This is quite different than a year ago, when there was at least a logjam of mediocre talent.

CB: The Dolphins have one of the most physical starting duos in the league, but they need a nickel back. Pro Bowler Sam Madison and Patrick Surtain are tough in press coverage, but they give up their share of big plays. With Terrell Buckley gone, the team might entrust Jerry Wilson and Greg Jeffries with bigger roles.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

KAULANA NOA

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

OUTLOOK

Wannstedt's first go-round in Miami will be interesting. In his previous stint with the Bears, Wannstedt's personnel evaluations were, at best, sketchy. The Dolphins' first-round pick belongs to Carolina, which means they do not select until No. 54.

The running back trio taken last year (Johnson, Collins, Rob Konrad) produced very little, but an improved offensive line would help the cause. The team needs help on the interior line and should be able to get a player such as Hawaii's Kaulana Noa or Leander Jordan from Indiana (Pa.). Jordan is the type of athlete Miami needs to replace players such as Gogan and Donnalley.

Depending on how far one slips, Miami could also get a young quarterback. Marshall's Chad Pennington and Louisville's Chris Redman likely will be long gone, but Giovanni Carmazzi of Hofstra or Tee Martin of Tennessee might not be. As long as the jury is out on Huard, the Dolphins will search for Marino's successor.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Damon Huard	Jay Fiedler
FB	Rob Konrad	Stanley Pritchett*
RB	J.J. Johnson	Autry Denson
WR	O.J. McDuffie	Yatil Green
WR	Tony Martin	Oronde Gadsden
TE	Hunter Goodwin	Ed Perry
LT	Richmond Webb	Brent Smith
LG	Heath Irwin	Mark Dixon
C	Tim Ruddy	John Bock*
RG	Kevin Donnalley	Mike Sheldon
RT	James Brown	Brent Smith

SPECIAL TEAMS

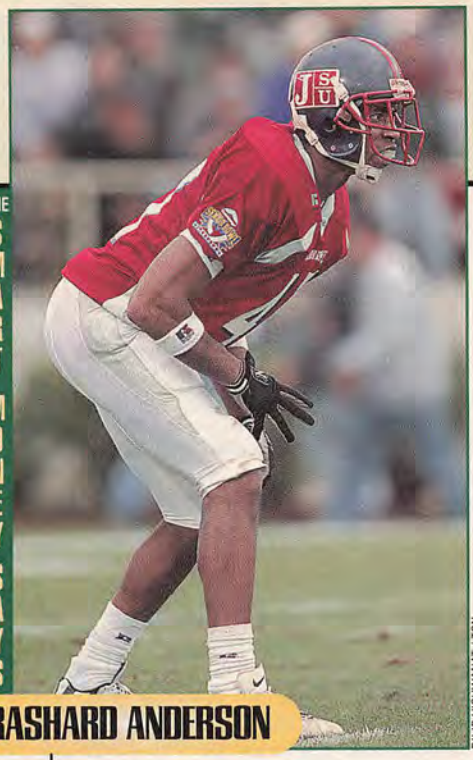
P	Brent Bartholomew	K Olindo Mare

DEFENSE

LE	Rich Owens	Trace Armstrong
LT	Tim Bowens	Lorenzo Bromell
RT	Daryl Gardener	Antoine Simpson
RE	Jason Taylor	Kenny Mixon
LOLB	Robert Jones	Scott Galyon
MLB	Zach Thomas	Dwight Hollier*
ROLB	Derrick Rodgers	Larry Izzo
LC	Patrick Surtain	Greg Jeffries
SS	Shawn Wooden*	Calvin Jackson*
FS	Brock Marion	Brian Walker
RC	Sam Madison	Jerry Wilson

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Minnesota VIKINGS



DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

If you like coach Dennis Green, you defend him by saying he is not afraid to pull the trigger and take chances on talented players, such as Randy Moss, and certainly has a lot of confidence in his system and ability to coach those players. If you are not a Green fan, you take the attitude the Vikings are getting careless and not looking long enough at character and intangibles. However, it would be unwise to bet against Green. He has power, instincts and a better feel for the salary cap than most coaches, and he will collect information from a variety of sources before making the final decision. This is an organization that attacks the draft.

The many offseason changes—most of them on the coaching staff—signify things are changing in Minnesota after a somewhat underachieving season and Green is looking at every aspect of the organization in an effort to improve the on-field performance. Green controls every aspect of personnel decisions. He is actively involved in free agency and the draft, and he has a great feel for the big picture in terms of player acquisitions. He works closely with longtime personnel director Frank Gilliam and assistant head coach Rich Solomon. Those are the three involved in any personnel decision.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

CB: Things are bad when the top cornerback on the roster is a recently converted wide receiver. That's what happened last year, when Robert Tate emerged late in the season as arguably the best cover man. Jimmy Hitchcock left in free agency, and his departure puts tremendous pressure on Kenny Wright, who fought hard during a maligned rookie season. The team miscalculated in '98 on Ramos McDonald and can't afford similar errors in judgment.

DE: The retirement of Chris Doleman hurts the defense. Despite his age, Doleman was playing some solid football at the end of last season. Dimitrius Underwood, a first-round pick last year, had been pegged as the heir apparent until he packed up his one-man circus and left town last August. Team sacks leader Duane Clemons played great in spurts, but the coaches were looking for more consistency and Clemons was not expected back. Ex-Falcon John Burrough fought injuries all last season, but he's a solid guy who works into the mix.

DT: Jerry Ball is probably finished as a starter inside, and the team must find a big base tackle to replace him. Tony Williams is an active, one-gap player, but he doesn't hold the point of attack like Ball once did. If the Vikings can't keep offensive linemen off MLB Ed McDaniel, opponents will continue to pound the ball between the tackles.

G: The release of perennial Pro Bowl player Randall McDaniel breaks up the left side of the line. Corbin Lacina likely will be plugged in his place, but McDaniel's are big shoes to fill. Mammoth RG David Dixon has marginal feet that are exposed every time he lines up against a quick defensive tackle, and he must show improvement next season.

TE: This is the only skill area on offense that hasn't scared opponents the past two years. Andrew Glover signed with the Saints in free agency, and Andrew Jordan is penciled in as the starter now. The move of Jim Kleinsasser to fullback makes this a "need" area for the second consecutive year.

LT: If there was one player who continually disappointed the Vikings last season, it was Todd Steussie. He did not perform like a top-tier tackle, especially in big games. Steussie can allow early mistakes to snowball, and the Vikings would be wise to find a serviceable backup they are comfortable with on a game-to-game basis.

WR: In his estimation, Cris Carter probably has two or three more productive years left. It's unclear whether Matthew Hatchette is a capable replacement for Jake Reed. Hatchette has the skills, but the club is unsure whether he's refined enough to make plays consistently. Tate's move to defense might give special teams player Chris Walsh more reps as a receiver.

QB: This position was in flux early in the offseason. It was unclear whether Randall Cunningham or Jeff George (who was unsigned) would be back. Although Daunte Culpepper, last year's top pick, clearly is the starter of the future, the team needs to find another arm in case of an emergency. That arm could belong to former NFL Europe star Todd Bouman.

OUTLOOK

The Vikings have huge needs in the secondary, and it almost would be shocking if they didn't look long and hard at a cover corner in the first round. There are some quality players available, but there could be a run on corners just before the Vikings' pick (25th). If that were the case and there wasn't a guy there they liked, the Vikings could try to trade down and acquire an additional third- or fourth-round pick. Don't expect them to move up in this draft; Green likes to keep all of his picks. They will work out every corner in an effort to find their player, and if a guy such as Jackson State's Rashard Anderson is sitting there at No. 25, they likely will nab him. They are not afraid to take a chance on a raw player.

Although the Vikings like to draft the best athlete available, and put a premium on speed and athleticism, this likely will be a defensive draft for them, especially on the first day, because they must become a better matchup team. This may be a draft dictated more by need than any in recent memory.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Randall Cunningham	Daunte Culpepper
FB	Jim Kleinsasser	John Henry Mills*
RB	Robert Smith	Moe Williams
WR	Cris Carter	Matthew Hatchette
WR	Randy Moss	Chris Walsh
TE	Andrew Jordan	Carlester Crumpler
LT	Todd Steussie	Jay Humphrey
LG	Corbin Lacina	Chris Liwienski
C	Matt Birk	Cory Withrow
RG	David Dixon	Chris Liwienski
RT	Korey Stringer	Jay Humphrey

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Mitch Berger	K	Gary Anderson

DEFENSE

LE	John Randle	Keith Council
LT	Jerry Ball	Joe Phillips*
RT	Tony Williams	Joe Phillips*
RE	John Burrough	Talance Sawyer
LOLB	Dwayne Rudd	Craig Sauer
MLB	Ed McDaniel	Rob Holmberg
ROLB	Kailee Wong	Orlick Johnson
LC	Kenny Wright	Chris Rodgers
SS	Robert Griffith	Antonio Banks
FS	Orlando Thomas	Anthony Bass
RC	Robert Tate	Keith Thibodeaux

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

New England PATRIOTS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

With Bill Belichick taking over as coach, look for the Patriots' power structure and personnel philosophy to change dramatically. Belichick is very much a hands-on coach, and he loves being involved in personnel. He will watch more tape and evaluate and work out more players than any other NFL coach, and as a result, draft day should be his domain.

Personnel director Bobby Grier has done a nice job running this department and keeping the talent level high, but it would be shocking if Belichick didn't gain final say on personnel decisions when he agreed to take the job. He puts a premium on toughness and productivity, but he also understands the need for athleticism. The Patriots have excellent scouts with a lot of experience, but they could be relegated to information gatherers under Belichick. Grier is a company man and likely will play whatever role best fits the organization. Look for Belichick to bring in his personnel assistant after the draft.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

LT: The surprising release of Bruce Armstrong made little sense, considering the Patriots did not have a capable replacement on the roster when the move was made. QB Drew Bledsoe can't feel comfortable knowing Armstrong won't be protecting his blindside. Regardless of who they sign to replace Armstrong, there will be a drop-off.

DE: Willie McGinest is a legitimate star, but the team needs a bookend on the left side. Brandon Mitchell started every game last season, but he doesn't offer enough on passing downs.

TE: It will be interesting to see which loss affects Bledsoe the most—Armstrong or Ben Coates. Coates, like Armstrong, was released without a replacement in place. Rod Rutledge hasn't seen much field time and is still raw in the passing game, and long snapper Mike Bartrum is the only other tight end on the roster. The Pats' intermediate passing game will be nonexistent if they don't find help.

RB: Getting rid of Terry Allen was the right move, but the team should address this need in the draft, not by signing more damaged goods. Some people in the front office think free-agent signee Raymont Harris could be the short-term answer, but that opinion isn't universal. Last year's second-round pick, Kevin Faulk, is nothing more than a third-down specialist.

DT: Starters Chad Eaton and Henry Thomas played below expectations last season. Thomas is clearly on the downside of his career, and Eaton's production dropped off badly after a strong '98. Backups were ineffective, and the team needs a new group that at least is capable of giving the starters an occasional break.

P: Lee Johnson is entering his 16th season, and his leg has lost pop. When the Patriots' offense sputtered last season, it exposed the need for a better kicking game.

WR: Terry Glenn's collapse down the stretch worries the team's new coaching staff. Glenn has yet to demonstrate the toughness that go-to receivers must possess, and his inability to make plays in the red zone puts pressure on the ground game. Shawn Jefferson left for Atlanta, leaving Troy Brown, Tony Simmons and Vincent Brisby. Brown and Simmons will compete for a starting job, although both are better-equipped for backup duty. Brisby hasn't done anything in three years.

G: After deciding not to re-sign free agent Heath Irwin, who started on the left side last season, the Pats likely will open with former starter Max Lane, who is not a natural guard. They also could use a better athlete to play opposite scrapper Todd Rucci.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

ANTHONY BECHT

OUTLOOK

This will be an interesting draft. It will be the first personnel collaboration between Belichick and Grier, and there are plenty of needs to address, especially on offense. The team's insistence on re-signing SS Lawyer Milloy was costly, and now the offense, minus Armstrong, Coates and Jefferson, is merely a skeleton of the group that went to the Super Bowl four seasons ago.

Also missing is the 16th overall pick of the draft, a price the Patriots paid to the Jets for access to Belichick.

Because they must now wait until No. 47 to make their first selection, the Patriots won't have the luxury of targeting a particular position. Look for Belichick and Grier to agree on the best-athlete-available course, and there will be some talented players on the board, including West Virginia TE Anthony Becht and Southern Mississippi DE Adalius Thomas.

Behind Miami's Bubba Franks, Becht is clearly the next best tight end in the draft. He carries a first-round grade with most teams and would ease the loss of Coates.

The Pats desperately need a pass rusher opposite McGinest and Thomas could be the guy. Though he's undersized, Thomas would fit well as a rookie in passing situations, and he should develop into a solid all-around player.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Drew Bledsoe	John Friesz
FB	Tony Carter	Chris Floyd
RB	Kevin Faulk	Raymont Harris
WR	Tony Simmons	Sean Morey
WR	Terry Glenn	Troy Brown
TE	Rod Rutledge	Mike Bartrum
LT	Ed Ellis	Derrick Fletcher
LG	Max Lane	Jason Anderson
C	Damien Woody	Jason Anderson
RG	Todd Rucci	Max Lane
RT	Zefross Moss	Derrick Fletcher

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Lee Johnson	K	Adam Vinatieri

DEFENSE

LE	Brandon Mitchell	Ferric Collons*
LT	Chad Eaton	Bob Kuberski*
RT	Henry Thomas	Brandon Mitchell
RE	Willie McGinest	Greg Spires
LOLB	Chris Slade	Bernard Russ
MLB	Ted Johnson	Andy Katzenmoyer
ROLB	Tedy Bruschi*	Marty Moore
LC	Ty Law	Tebucky Jones
SS	Lawyer Milloy	Larry Whigham
FS	Chris Carter	Tony George
RC	Steve Israel*	Kato Serwanga

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

New Orleans SAINTS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

On the heels of six straight losing seasons, the Saints totally revamped their front office and coaching staff in the offseason. Randy Mueller came over from the Seahawks to head up the front office. Although he is not a high-profile guy, he is well-respected in NFL circles. Mickey Loomis, Mueller's right-hand man, joined him from Seattle. Pro personnel director Charles Bailey, who does a great job, is a holdover from the Bill Kuharich-Mike Ditka regime.

Under Mueller and new coach Jim Haslett, the Saints likely will emphasize speed and athletic ability, both of which are sorely missing from this roster. Ditka favored tough, hard-nosed underachievers and, as a result, the Saints became a terrible matchup team. This is one of the NFL's worst rosters in terms of talent, but look for Mueller to go slowly in the rebuilding process. It will take two to three years.

Haslett has a strong reputation as a good evaluator of talent, but it may take time for Mueller and him to work together to find some common ground. A new coaching staff usually spends much of its first year putting together a playbook and getting ready for the season. As a result, don't expect it to have a tremendous amount of input in personnel decisions.

TEAM NEEDS

CB: The front office's inability to keep Ashley Ambrose really hurts. Ambrose was the only corner who played with any confidence last season. Without him, this secondary could be the league's worst in 2000. Former top pick Alex Molden will get a fresh start with the new staff and needs to step up. Fred Weary, who showed some promise during stretches last season, will compete in camp.

MLB: Chris Bordano's struggles last season proved he isn't the answer. Haslett needs to weed out some of the overachieving tough guys Ditka was enamored with, and Bordano would be a good place to start. Charlie Clemons, a free-agent addition who was a nickel backer with the Rams, will get a chance to win the starting job.

WR: The addition of ex-Chief Joe Horn gives the Saints a big-play receiver who can run underneath new QB Jeff Blake's well-thrown go routes. Ex-Viking Jake Reed should be able to stretch a defense better than the inconsistent Eddie Kennison (now with the Bears) did. Keith Poole has the speed but wasn't consistent enough over the course of last season. He needs to improve.

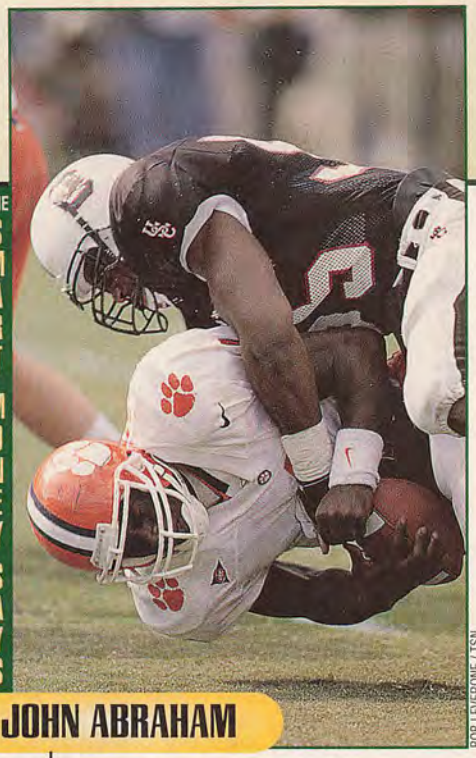
INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

DE: The return of a healthy Joe Johnson will go a long way, but New Orleans needs another bookend. Neither Jared Tomich or Brady Smith (now with the Falcons) had enough size to hold up against the run last year. Troy Wilson and Willie Whitehead had surprisingly productive seasons but a versatile, every-down player is a necessity. The lack of high draft picks will make it tough for the Saints to get their player in this draft.

FS: Haslett likes his defenses to be aggressive, but in order to do that he'll have to find a more rangy center fielder. Sammy Knight, who will switch from strong safety, may be the guy. Willie Clay and Rob Kelly split the starting time last season, but neither provided the deep help the cornerbacks needed.

DT: La'Roi Glover has developed into one of the league's best, and the free-agent acquisition of former Charger Norman Hand could be huge. Wayne Martin was formidable for a long time, but there has been talk of him retiring.

OLB: Mark Fields is a legitimate playmaker and Keith Mitchell has improved dramatically, but the Saints are not prepared to handle any injuries. The backups are solely special-teams players.



BOB LEVERONE / TSN

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

JOHN ABRAHAM

QB: Signing Blake to be the starter was a questionable move, but at least his big arm fits well with the team's vertical receivers. Billy Joe Tolliver will return as a backup, and late-season starter Jake Delhomme showed some promise. Although they're committed to Blake for four years, the Saints should begin looking for a young prospect.

OUTLOOK

This will be the second year in a row the Saints spend much of draft day as spectators rather than participants. Last year, they gave up their entire draft for RB Ricky Williams, who suffered through an injury-marred season. The jury is still out on whether Ditka made the right decision. The Saints basically mortgaged their future on Williams and are without first- and third-round picks in this draft. They will make only one selection on the first day, not good for a team with so many pressing needs.

With glaring needs at wide receiver and on defense—and no first-round pick—the Saints will have to hit on a quality player in the second round. Don't be surprised if they try to nab a big-play wide receiver such as Florida State's Ron Dugans, Jackson State's Sylvester Morris or Georgia Tech's Dez White if they drop into the second round.

There also may be a decent group of corners available, and New Orleans could look at an edge pass rusher such as Darren Howard, John Engelberger, John Abraham or Adalius Thomas. Haslett's background is on defense and that may be where he looks in this draft, although the Saints must take pressure off Williams with a more diversified and wide-open passing attack.

Don't be shocked if Mueller tries to wheel and deal for additional picks. The last thing the Saints want is to sit through the first day of the draft and pick only one player.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jeff Blake	Billy Joe Tolliver
FB	Aaron Craver	Marvin Powell
RB	Ricky Williams	Wilmont Perry
WR	Jake Reed	Keith Poole
WR	Joe Horn	Andre Hastings
TE	Cam Cleeland	Andrew Glover
LT	William Roaf	Daryl Terrell
LG	Tom Ackerman	Mike Halapin
C	Wally Williams	Jerry Fontenot
RG	Chris Naeole	Mike Halapin
RT	Kyle Turley	Daryl Terrell

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Tommy Barnhardt	K Doug Brien

DEFENSE

LE	Jared Tomich	Willie Whitehead
LT	La'Roi Glover	Robert Newkirk
RT	Norman Hand	Kevin Thomas
RE	Joe Johnson	Troy Wilson
LOLB	Mark Fields	Donnie Spragan
MLB	Charlie Clemons	Chris Bordano
ROLB	Keith Mitchell	Joe Tuipala
LC	Alex Molden	Fred Thomas
SS	Rob Kelly	
FS	Sammy Knight	Willie Clay*
RC	Fred Weary	Tyrone Drakeford

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

New York GIANTS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The Giants' grading system was adapted several years ago from former Patriots general manager Bucko Kilroy, and it is a system that several NFL teams utilized. The Giants categorize players in terms of size, speed and athletic ability, and once players are grouped the team usually stays true to its system. The system prevents the Giants from making emotional decisions on draft day; they take players off the board as they have previously graded them. They don't always draft according to need, but will likely take the highest-graded player, regardless of position.

G.M. Ernie Accorsi was a guiding force in building the Browns into a Super Bowl contender in the 1980s, and he has a solid, veteran scouting staff with him in New York. The Giants have done a nice job in recent years in the middle and late portions of the draft, but they have not done well in the first round—and it has cost them.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

RB: The release of Gary Brown almost ensures that the Giants will use their top pick on a running back. They need to find an offensive centerpiece, not just a guy who moves the chains—although even that would be an upgrade. The team reached on both Joe Montgomery and Sean Bennett a year ago, and the front office realizes neither is the answer.

OT: Re-signing finesse LT Roman Oben was a top priority in free agency, and if that is not accomplished this team is in a world of hurt. The Giants, who spent two picks on guards last season, must turn their focus to the edges this April. Look for Luke Petitgout to get a shot to prove himself at tackle, his natural position, after failing badly inside as a rookie. Slow-footed RT Scott Gragg is No. 1 on the depth chart, but he doesn't have the range to protect immobile QB Kerry Collins, and the team would like to put a better athlete out there this season.

QB: No more debate: Collins is coach Jim Fassel's guy. Collins was slow to adjust to the Giants' system last season, and Fassel is hoping a year's experience will make a difference. Jason Garrett, Troy Aikman's backup in Dallas, is the No. 2 guy.

CB: The most well-attended-to limb in the Big Apple belongs to Jason Sehorn. The invaluable cover cornerback has barely played the past two seasons after successive leg injuries, but he's expected back at full strength by training camp. Problem is, no one knows the aftereffects the broken leg will have. The team will not re-sign longtime starter Phillippi Sparks, a free agent, opting instead to secure backup Conrad Hamilton. If Hamilton starts, where is the depth?

DE: Numerous factors over the last two years have negatively impacted what once was a position of strength. The success Chad Bratzke enjoyed with the Colts, coupled with Michael Strahan's disappointing season, lends debate to whether the Giants evaluated their talent correctly. Former No. 1 pick Cedric Jones saved his career with a solid season on the right side, but this unit desperately needs some able-bodied replacements to allow defensive coordinator John Fox the luxury of keeping his starters fresh.

OLB: Jessie Armstead's banged-up knee required surgery after the Pro Bowl, and his mobility is becoming a concern. Ryan Phillips, the other starter, is an active, serviceable player, but he doesn't make enough impact plays. The Giants need to find a better complement to Armstead. They lost steady reserve Scott Galyon to the Dolphins.

DT: Keith Hamilton had another solid season, but the Giants need Robert Harris, who missed 10 games, to get back on the field. Harris' injury pressed Christian Peter into the lineup, but Peter is nothing more than a backup-type player. Accorsi should be able to find more productive reserves than Ryan Hale and George Williams.

TE: Pete Mitchell, a free-agency addition in '99, produced well in the second half of the season after getting on the same page with Collins. Look for Howard Cross, who is heading into his 12th season, to get the starting nod. Young Dan Campbell is being groomed as Cross' replacement.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

RON DAYNE

ED NESSEN / TSN

OUTLOOK

Although the Giants have several backs on their roster, they don't seem to have a guy who can give them a ball-control offense. With the 11th pick, they will likely be staring at Wisconsin's Ron Dayne, a player who could pound the ball 25-30 times a game and loosen up defenses for the passing game. Although Dayne took a lot of hits in college and lacks breakaway speed, he would instantly upgrade the team's running game.

If the Giants decided not to go for a running back, they might look long and hard for a cornerback, although there does not appear to be one who merits being picked 11th in this draft. Defensive tackle is another possibility, although it is unlikely that the Giants would reach for one—unless a guy such as Corey Simon would slip.

You can always count on the Giants to be true to their board and draft their highest-rated player, regardless of position. It doesn't always make conventional sense, but they will not waver from their system. However, this looks like a draft where their need and value will come together at No. 11, which could result in Dayne becoming a Giant.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Kerry Collins	Jason Garrett
FB	Charles Way	Greg Comella
RB	Joe Montgomery	Tiki Barber
WR	Amani Toomer	Joe Jurevicius
WR	Ike Hilliard	Brian Alford
TE	Howard Cross	Pete Mitchell
LT	Roman Oben*	Lomas Brown
LG	Mike Rosenthal	Jason Whittle
C	Derek Engler	Lance Scott
RG	Ron Stone	Jason Whittle
RT	Scott Gragg	Luke Petitgout

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Brad Maynard	K	Brad Daluiso

DEFENSE

LE	Michael Strahan	Bernard Holsey*
LT	Robert Harris	Christian Peter
RT	Keith Hamilton	Ryan Hale
RE	Cedric Jones	George Williams
LOLB	Ryan Phillips	O.J. Childress
MLB	Corey Widmer	Pete Monty
ROLB	Jessie Armstead	O.J. Childress
LC	Conrad Hamilton	Andre Weathers
SS	Sam Garnes	Lyle West
FS	Shaun Williams	Tre Thomas
RC	Jason Sehorn	Emmanuel McDaniel

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

New York JETS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

With Bill Parcells stepping aside and Bill Belichick leaving, the Jets' front-office philosophy is not entirely clear. The key might be the role Parcells takes in the draft. He could be involved in every decision, or he could be much more hands off.

Scouting director Dick Haley is well-respected, but he is close to retirement. Pro personnel director Scott Pioli, Parcells' son-in-law, left to join Belichick in New England. But the Jets still have a veteran scouting staff, though it primarily gathers information without much input in draft decisions.

Belichick was very active in personnel moves and personally worked out many players, which might have been one reason the Jets were so successful in the later rounds, despite not having a lot of high draft picks. This is a good organization, but several questions must be answered for the personnel department to stay on top.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

DE: The Jets' defensive ends had just four sacks last season. While their system relies mainly on outside linebackers to generate pressure, the Jets need to improve athletically here. Rick Lyle and Anthony Pleasant each started every game last season, but neither was very productive. The team is not confident Dorian Boose or Eric Ogbogu can get the job done full time.

FS: The experiment with aging Steve Atwater lasted one season and now the Jets need another stopgap player. Because its window of opportunity is short, New York needs to find a starter in free agency because it does not want to entrust the deep part of the field to a rookie.

TE: As happened at free safety, the Jets miscalculated on what Eric Green could offer. He also is gone after just one year. New York's trio of tight ends combined for 18 catches last season but part of that futility was due to instability at quarterback. Fred Baxter and Blake Spence are fine reserves, but the Jets need a top-flight receiver who can work the middle of the field.

OLB: Slapping the franchise tag on Mo Lewis was a good move, but he and Roman Phifer are both entering their 10th seasons. Former first-round pick James Farrior's play has been spotty, but his ability to blitz and cover intrigues the team. The Jets could use another young player to learn under the two veterans.

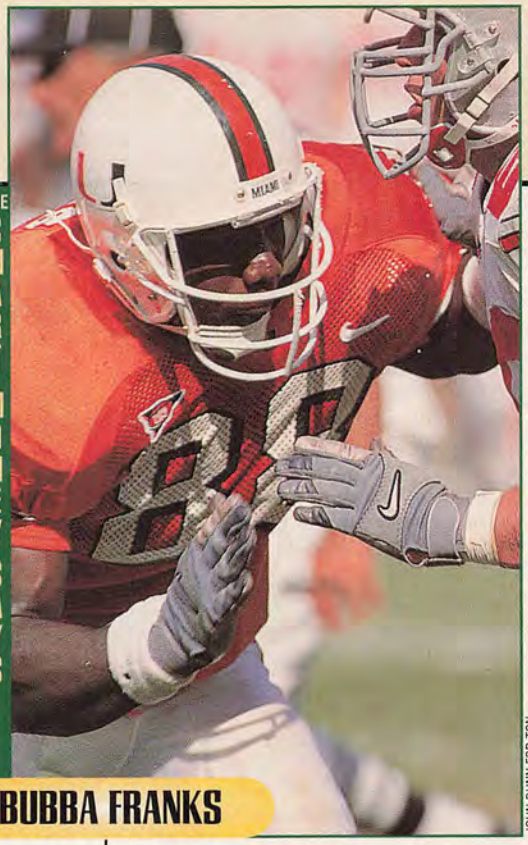
QB: A healthy Vinny Testaverde will give the Jets some stability, now that Ray Lucas has proven he can play. New York released Rick Mirer before free agency, and the Jets could go a couple different ways to replace him. Adding a veteran is safer considering Lucas' inexperience, but drafting a young arm might be a better option.

OT: The release of Jumbo Elliott will force coaches to make some risky moves. The Jets likely will move Jason Fabini from the right side to the left and go with second-year player Ryan Young on the right. Fabini is a much better fit on the right side, where his limited range is not exposed as much. The Jets would be better off with a second-tier veteran capable of playing a couple of seasons.

FB: Coaches love Richie Anderson's attitude and versatility, and Jerald Sowell has his moments as a runner, but neither is the bulldozer this team needs clearing the way for Curtis Martin. New York could use more of a true fullback.

WR: Only four receivers caught passes last year because this group, aside from Wayne Chrebet, avoided injury. Dwight Stone will likely return as the fifth receiver and Quinn Early is expected to retire, which leaves room to groom a youngster.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS



JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

BUBBA FRANKS

OUTLOOK

Parcells had this team playing as well as anybody at the end of last season, but he won't benefit from what should be a great draft class. With the 16th and 18th picks, the Jets should be able to grab Miami (Fla.) TE Bubba Franks and upgrade an aging defense or a weak offensive line.

Don't expect the Jets to package these picks and move up because they are set at skill positions on offense and do not have enough to make a move for Penn State DE Courtney Brown. The Jets are in need of pass-rush help, and that is what Tennessee's Shaun Ellis, Virginia Tech's John Engelberger or Kansas State's Darren Howard would bring. The Jets should have a shot at one of them, but they could try to replace Atwater with Deon Grant, also from Tennessee. Grant's athleticism would allow them to match up better in coverage, and he excels vs. the run.

Instead of moving Fabini to the left side, the Jets also could be interested in Wisconsin's Chris McIntosh or Oklahoma's Stockar McDougle. The latter is a better fit for the left side because players his size rarely move as well as he does. If the Jets opt to select McDougle, their backside protection problems could be solved for a decade.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Vinny Testaverde	Ray Lucas
FB	Richie Anderson	Jerald Sowell
RB	Curtis Martin	Bernie Parmalee
WR	Wayne Chrebet	Dedric Ward
WR	Keyshawn Johnson	Quinn Early
TE	Fred Baxter	Blake Spence
LT	Jason Fabini	Ian Rafferty
LG	Kerry Jenkins	J.P. Machado
C	Kevin Mawae	Mike Gisler
RG	Randy Thomas	J.P. Machado
RT	Ryan Young	Siupeli Malamala

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Tom Tupa	K	John Hall

DEFENSE

LE	Rick Lyle	Dorian Boose
NT	Jason Ferguson	Ernie Logan
RE	Anthony Pleasant*	Eric Ogbogu
SOLB	Mo Lewis	Casey Dailey
SILB	Bryan Cox	J.J. Syvrud
WILB	Marvin Jones	Dwayne Gordon
WOLB	Roman Phifer	James Farrior
LC	Aaron Glenn	Delphrine Lee
SS	Victor Green	Chris Hayes
FS	Omar Stoutmire	Scott Frost
RC	Marcus Coleman	Ray Mickens

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Oakland RAIDERS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The Raiders' draft philosophy never changes because one person is in charge of personnel decisions: owner Al Davis. He watches film, reads reports, is actively involved in all draft meetings and still has a great feel for what he wants in the draft. Oakland puts a premium on speed and athleticism and uses a combine drill, the short-shuttle, to test athletic ability.

Coach Jon Gruden loves watching film and evaluating players and is hands-on in personnel moves, although the Raiders have been hindered recently by salary-cap limitations. Senior assistant Bruce Allen is an excellent contract negotiator and a creative big-picture person. He is best at making deals that allow the Raiders to maneuver in the draft. There is no deal Allen will not consider, and because of that, you never know which way the Raiders will go.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

In the past year, the Raiders brought in two veteran scouts, Mike Lombardi and Chet Franklin. Lombardi ran the Browns' scouting department several years ago. Franklin is a former Raider who had a stint running the Saints' pro personnel department. Both work well with coaches, know what Gruden and Davis want and have a solid handle on the Raiders' needs. Davis is comfortable with this group and, although he makes the final decisions, he accepts input.

TEAM NEEDS

SS: If economics prevent Anthony Newman from returning (he was released in February), the Raiders will be left with Calvin Branch, retread Charles Mincy and undrafted free agent Marcus Ray. The Raiders may opt to bring Newman back—or draft a replacement.

CB: The left side is solid with Charles Woodson. The re-signing of Darrien Gordon and the addition of free agent Tory James provide depth behind Eric Allen, but the Raiders need new blood on the right side.

Allen is entering his 13th season and may never fully recover from 1998 knee surgery.

OLB: This is a problem if Richard Harvey, also released, is not brought back. The Raiders have some young players, but neither Sam Sword nor Eric Barton covers well. Coaches like both players, but they are too raw to play every down.

WR: The team achieved its top offseason priority when Tim Brown decided to stay. Brown, 33, continues to defy age and play at a high level, but the passing game needs more. James Jett is a nice deep threat, but the Raiders do not have a capable third receiver. Terry Mickens was not the answer, and the Raiders probably will use a high draft pick on one. The lack of quality receivers has limited Gruden's playcalling.

P: Oakland cannot afford another season like it got from Leo Araguz, who ranked near the bottom of the league. Poor punting continually put the defense in bad situations.

G: Steve Wisniewski will return, which ensures a solid left side. Coaches think he can continue to play at a high level for a couple more seasons. The right side should be solid with Barry Sims or Darryl Ashmore, but that doesn't mean the team can't improve with another young body.

K: Kicking cost the Raiders at least three wins last season; Michael Husted and Joe Nedney failed miserably. Gruden cannot endure another season like that, but his ability to upgrade here is limited. There are a few reliable free agents, and Florida State's Sebastian Janikowski will be considered.

DE: This is not a true need area, but the Raiders could use some depth. Lance Johnstone has developed into a top edge rusher, but the left side is unsettled. Tony Bryant, who wore down after midseason, will compete with free-agent signee Regan Upshaw for the starting job. The Raiders don't know if either is the long-term answer.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

TRAVIS TAYLOR

ED NESSEN / TSN

OUTLOOK

Gruden got the news he wanted when Brown stayed with the team. Now it is the front office's job to find a complementary receiver to discourage double teams. This draft is loaded with big-time receiving talent from big-time programs. Florida's Travis Taylor is a big, smooth target with tremendous hands and usually raises his level of play in crunch time. Georgia Tech's Dez White is another option. White can do everything athletically that teams want from a receiver, and he could be around at No. 17.

Another direction the Raiders might go is cornerback. Though there is no one like Woodson on the board, there are some players who could help strengthen the right side. Davis loves speed, and his team could get plenty of it with Jackson State's Rashard Anderson. Although he struggled a bit against tougher competition in the Senior Bowl, Anderson has great size and, with Woodson, would give the Raiders two potentially dominating press corners.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Rich Gannon	Bobby Hoying
FB	Jon Ritchie	Zack Crockett
RB	Tyrone Wheatley	Napoleon Kaufman
WR	Tim Brown	Terry Mickens*
WR	James Jett	Rodney Williams
TE	Rickey Dudley	Jeremy Brigham
LT	Mo Collins	Matt Stinchcomb
LG	Steve Wisniewski	Gennaro DiNapoli
C	Barret Robbins	Adam Treu
RG	Barry Sims	Darryl Ashmore
RT	Lincoln Kennedy	Nate Parks

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Leo Araguz	K	Joe Nedney

DEFENSE

LE	Tony Bryant	Regan Upshaw
LT	Darrell Russell	Chuck Osborne
RT	Russell Maryland	Grady Jackson
RE	Lance Johnstone	Roderick Coleman
LOLB	Richard Harvey*	Travian Smith
MLB	Greg Biekert	Sam Sword
ROLB	Eric Barton	Travian Smith
LC	Charles Woodson	Darrien Gordon
SS	Anthony Newman*	Calvin Branch
FS	Eric Turner	Charles Mincy
RC	Eric Allen	Tory James

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Philadelphia EAGLES

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Year Two of the Andy Reid regime is under way, and it is difficult to tell if the Eagles are getting better in terms of personnel. This is a roster that could take several years to replenish, but the Eagles may be on the right track.

Well-respected Tom Modrak runs the personnel department, but it is difficult to tell what kind of power he has. Modrak is an easy-going, non-confrontational guy who is well liked, and as a result, his name has been mentioned in connection with several other teams. Reid and Modrak seem to work well together—neither is a big ego guy—and a coaching staff that is loyal to Reid has considerable input into draft decisions. Owner Jeffrey Lurie and V.P. Joe Banner are involved in personnel decisions, but they don't meddle. Instead, they let the football people do their jobs.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

The Eagles lack the freedom to follow the best-athlete-available concept because they have so many pressing needs. They will not make a lot of moves on draft day unless, possibly, they move down to acquire additional picks—which they really need. Look for them to stay fairly conservative and make need picks in the draft and moderate acquisitions in free agency.

TEAM NEEDS

WR: The Eagles went the free-agency route last season to restock their receivers, but the season-ending evaluations did not meet expectations. Starters Charles Johnson and Torrance Small are stopgap players who should be nothing more than No. 2 or No. 3 options. Na Brown will get a longer look in training camp but figures to be in the same class as Johnson and Small.

DT: The coaching staff has emphasized obtaining a quality run-stuffer to shore up the team's sieve-like middle. The team will make a run at a couple of free agents; if that fails, it could get some solid players in the middle rounds of the draft. Hollis Thomas is a nice complementary tackle with a quick first step, but the team needs more. The club lost Steve Martin to the Chiefs, which will hurt the depth at the position. Mark Wheeler didn't do much in '99 after coming over from the Patriots.

SS: It seems like the Eagles are always searching for a better answer at this position. Gritty Tim Hauck started all 16 games last season, but the Eagles need to upgrade the athleticism at this position. Mike Zorich, Hauck's predecessor, also was an overachieving tough guy that didn't offer much in terms of range. Damon Moore, a 1999 rookie, could be the solution, but he needs more coaching.

G: This position featured players at opposite ends of the age spectrum. Rookie Doug Brzezinski started at left guard, and 14-year vet Jeff Dellenbach played the majority of time at right guard. The Eagles can't settle for the same situation next season. Brzezinski has the skills to start for the next decade, but more mobility is needed on the right side to diversify the run game.

TE: Luther Broughton is a teaser because he flashes brilliance and then disappears. If he can play with more consistency and Jamie Asher can recover from a knee injury, the passing game won't be in bad shape. Chad Lewis is a decent player and he will start—for now. But there still is a glaring need for a complete threat who is reliable in the run game.

FB: Cecil Martin grabbed the starting job from Kevin Turner last season and impressed the coaching staff with his tenacity and attitude. All he needs to do now is work on his route running. Once he gets a better feel in the passing game, Martin will be a solid starter. The team won't re-sign Turner, so it must find a backup.

K: Veteran Norm Johnson was erratic at all the wrong times last season. The Eagles could have won a couple of more games had the kicking game come through. Johnson will be 40 in May and needs to pushed by a younger leg in training camp.

T: The Eagles' long streak of draft misses at this position ended in '98, when they took Tra Thomas in the first round. They added Titans free agent Jon Runyan as a bookend. Runyan is one of the NFL's most underrated linemen and should instantly upgrade the offense. Jermane Mayberry and Lonnie Palelei formed a much-maligned combination in '99. New backup help is in order.

OUTLOOK

The Eagles appear on their way to turning things around. Their draft last year was a huge success, and QB Donovan McNabb is on his way to becoming an elite player. Getting Runyan is a good sign; few prominent free agents would have considered the Eagles a couple of years ago.

The front office needs to keep the momentum going with another strong draft. McNabb is desperate for help, and that help may come in the form of Michigan State WR Plaxico Burress. If Burress is gone by the time the Eagles pick sixth, they need to shift their focus to the defensive line. The Eagles had trouble stopping the run last season, and they need some athleticism inside. Florida State DT Corey Simon would be a perfect fit; he can play the run and gets quick penetration on passing downs. A front four of Hugh Douglas, Hollis Thomas, Simon and Greg Jefferson wouldn't be bad. If Simon is gone, the Eagles could reach for a receiver or a tight end, such as Miami's Bubba Franks.

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

PLAXICO BURRESS

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Donovan McNabb	Doug Pederson
FB	Cecil Martin	Edwin Watson
RB	Duce Staley	Eric Bieniemy*
WR	Torrance Small	Troy Smith
WR	Charles Johnson	Na Brown
TE	Chad Lewis	Luther Broughton
LT	Tra Thomas	Ryan Schau
LG	Doug Brzezinski	Oliver Ross
C	Steve Everitt	Bubba Miller
RG	Jermane Mayberry	Lonnie Palelei
RT	Jon Runyan	Lonnie Palelei

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Sean Landeta	K	Norm Johnson

DEFENSE

LE	Greg Jefferson	Brandon Whiting
LT	Hollis Thomas	Kelly Gregg
RT	Mark Wheeler	Pernell Davis
RE	Hugh Douglas	Mike Mamula
LOLB	Barry Gardner	James Darling
MLB	Jeremiah Trotter	Barry Gardner
ROLB	William Thomas	Mike Caldwell
LC	Troy Vincent	Allen Rossum
SS	Tim Hauck*	Damon Moore
FS	Brian Dawkins	Rashard Cook
RC	Bobby Taylor	Al Harris

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Pittsburgh STEELERS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

After years of stability in the front office, change is in the air. Highly respected Tom Donahoe, director of football operations for eight seasons, is no longer a member of the Steelers family, bowing out after a power struggle with coach Bill Cowher. Also gone is college scouting director Max McCartney. The new sheriff in town is Pittsburgh native Kevin Colbert, formerly director of pro scouting for the Lions. Colbert, 43, is efficient, hard-working and unassuming—and he knows how to evaluate talent.

The Steelers lack flash but have a blue-collar, decision-making group in place that reflects the city.

Historically, the club has done particularly well in the middle to late rounds. Though the Steelers typically lose a lot of players to free agency, they usually keep their talent level up (although the club has lost more players than it has been able to replace in recent years). An examination of the NFL shows many former Steelers making huge contributions to their teams.

Cowher now has the final say on all personnel decisions, and he and his staff work diligently on the evaluation side. Cowher and Colbert likely will be on the same page philosophically.

TEAM NEEDS

DL: Losing Orpheus Roye in free agency was one thing the team couldn't afford. Nolan Harrison, who rarely stays healthy enough to make an impact, also could depart. The team signed Kimo von Oelhoffen, the former Bengal, and ex-Patriot Chris Sullivan, but neither is anything to get excited about. The Steelers probably wish they had worked harder to retain Oliver Gibson a year ago because Joel Steed's banged-up knees have really slowed him. With virtually no legitimate prospects on the depth chart, it's imperative that Pittsburgh find help in the draft.

OT: The recent release of Justin Strzelczyk puts a greater emphasis on this position. Though Wayne Gandy was steady at left tackle last season, the coaching staff would like to move him back to the right side and draft a better pass protector for the blindside. Anthony Brown and Chris Conrad saw starting duty last season, but both have marginal skills. Pittsburgh has yet to find a serviceable replacement for Leon Searcy, who left four years ago.

QB: Few people other than Cowher have faith in Kordell Stewart's ability as a starter. Stewart has vowed to dedicate himself in the offseason, but he'll have to fend off a challenge from veteran Kent Graham, who was signed from the Giants as a free agent. Still, the Steelers don't have a young guy to groom if neither Stewart nor Graham produces.

WR: This is a "need" area almost every season, and it won't change if the Steelers continue to reach for players such as 5-9 Troy Edwards. Pittsburgh's offense will remain one-dimensional until legitimate wide receivers are brought in. What the current group lacks is size. Without anyone to push safeties deep, opponents will continue stacking the line to stop Jerome Bettis.

CB: Neither Dewayne Washington nor Chad Scott is a shut-down corner, and the Steelers desperately need someone who can take away the opponent's best receiver. Washington is solid in all areas but spectacular in none. Scott is better suited for a nickel role because he doesn't run well. The team had few options in free agency, so look for it to target this position in the draft.

FS: Pittsburgh learned last season why Jacksonville didn't fight to keep Travis Davis, whom the Steelers signed as a free agent. Though he plays tough near the line of scrimmage, Davis is vulnerable in deep coverage. Scott Shields, who as a rookie last season intercepted four passes in a nickel role, could push for the starting job.

C: The Steelers have had one of the best centers of all-time over the past 12 years, but injuries are catching up with Dermontti Dawson. Last year's backup, Jim Sweeney, who has played 16 NFL seasons, is expected to retire. If the Steelers fail to address an impending problem here, it could haunt them.

RB: As long as Pittsburgh's passing game struggles, Bettis will continue to absorb punishment. Big backs have only a certain number of carries in their legs, and Bettis could hit a wall sooner than most Steelers fans think. Amos Zereoue, a third-round pick last year, could be a nice third-down back, but he doesn't appear durable enough to carry the load. Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala is expected to be the primary backup.

OUTLOOK

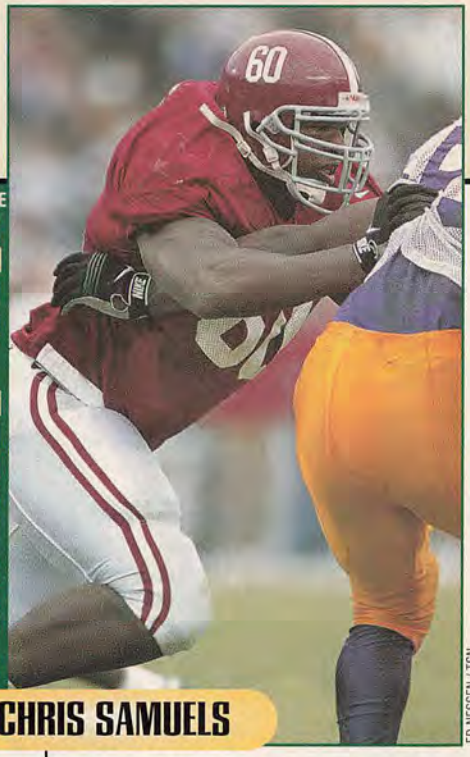
With the eighth selection in the first round, the Steelers might opt to find a way to spread the field. A big wide receiver who can get deep—such as Michigan State's Plaxico Burress—certainly would make sense as the club's first pick. But remember, the Steelers are in dire need of a left tackle, and Alabama's Chris Samuels (or even Oklahoma's Stockar McDougle) could be hard to pass on. Samuels could help protect Pittsburgh's quarterback for a decade.

Cowher appears committed to either Stewart or Graham, but quarterback surely is a position of need. Still, don't look for Pittsburgh to take a shot at Chad Pennington or Chris Redman. A sleeper-type pick in the later rounds is more likely.

Pittsburgh also lost its best defensive lineman, Roye, and that may entice the Steelers to consider a pass rusher.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

THE SMART MONEY SAYS



CHRIS SAMUELS

ED NESSEN / TSN

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Kordell Stewart	Kent Graham
FB	Jon Witman	Richard Huntley
RB	Jerome Bettis	Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala
WR	Hines Ward	Will Blackwell
WR	Troy Edwards	Courtney Hawkins*
TE	Mark Bruener	Matt Cushing
LT	Wayne Gandy	Kris Farris
LG	Alan Faneca	Rich Tylski
C	Dermontti Dawson	Roger Duffy
RG	Brenden Stai	Rich Tylski
RT	Shar Pourdanesh	Anthony Brown

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Josh Miller	K	Kris Brown

DEFENSE

LE	Nolan Harrison*	Kimo von Oelhoffen
NT	Joel Steed	Jeremy Staat
RE	Kevin Henry	Chris Sullivan
ROLB	Joey Porter	Mike Vrabel
ILB	Earl Holmes	Chad Kelsay
ILB	Levon Kirkland	John Fiala
LOLB	Jason Gildon	Mike Vrabel
LC	Chad Scott	Deshea Townsend
SS	Lethon Flowers	Scott Shields
FS	Travis Davis	Scott Shields
RC	Dewayne Washington	Jason Simmons

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

St. Louis RAMS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Obviously, the Rams are doing something right because they are Super Bowl champions. As a result of their success, they elevated personnel director Charley Armey to general manager. Although there were changes in the coaching staff, precipitated by offensive coordinator Mike Martz replacing retired Dick Vermeil as head coach, the team's philosophy will stay the same. Armey has a solid scouting staff that is run efficiently, and the Rams seem to be making all the right moves on the free agency and draft fronts.

In recent years, the Rams have put a premium on speed and athleticism, and it shows on the field. In an era when individual matchups are critical, the Rams are the best in the NFL in this category. Club president John Shaw does not interfere or meddle in the front office and gives his coaches and scouts every opportunity to be successful. With Vermeil gone, look for the coaches to have a little less input in personnel decisions. Although Armey and his staff will work well with Martz and his coaches, it is Armey's show, and he will make all final decisions on who winds up on the roster.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

CB: Retaining the services of Pro Bowl corner and team leader Todd Lyght was the top offseason priority. The Rams are lucky Lyght wants to stay in St. Louis. Dexter McCleon, the other starter, can be exposed, and he'll have to hold off Dre' Bly and Taje Allen in training camp. Both young players showed flashes in nickel situations, and the staff thinks Bly, a rookie in '99, could separate himself from the pack.

K: A plant-leg injury caused Jeff Wilkins some problems last season, but the team lost confidence in him regardless. Wilkins is too erratic from beyond 40 yards, and the Rams were lucky he didn't have to decide many games. They signed Jeff Hall for 2000, but he isn't necessarily the answer. Hall wasn't able to capitalize on his shot in Washington last year. The Rams could reach for a kicker in the first couple of rounds.

SS: Starter Billy Jenkins is a favorite of the staff, but he doesn't have the cover skills to justify anything more than a backup role. Jenkins is a valuable run-stuffer and tireless worker, but the defense could use more speed at this position.

DT: D'Marco Farr is in the prime of his career, but Ray Agnew is nearing the end of his. Aside from wide receiver, the Rams don't have much depth at most positions, and there is only Jeff Zgonina behind Farr and Agnew. Adding a quality veteran reserve would help keep Agnew fresh. And the Rams need to start grooming his replacement.

LG: Tom Nutten held up last season, but he is ideally suited to be a swing backup because he can play on the left and right sides. The Rams are comfortable entering 2000 with him as the starter, but adding a more athletic guard would be an upgrade in pass protection. QB Kurt Warner is too important to this offense to take any chances.

RT: Although he had a few poor games against some of the league's top pass rushers, Fred Miller's play improved to the point that he became an attractive free agent. The Titans were so impressed, they gave him big money to leave St. Louis. The Rams are so sure Ryan Tucker is the man to replace Miller that they matched an $8.25 million offer—including a $4 million signing bonus—Tucker received from Miami.

OLB: On a team with more holes, this would not be considered a true "need" position. The team's success brought Mike Jones the recognition he deserves as one of the NFL's top playmaking linebackers. It's easy to overlook Todd Collins over the course of a game because his contributions are subtle, but he rarely makes a mistake. Charlie Clemons, a valuable, nickel-rush specialist, left for New Orleans after the Rams elected not to match the Saints' offer.

P: The special teams were among the league leaders in virtually every statistical category except punting. Mike Horan filled in admirably for injured Rick Tuten, but neither is the answer. The Rams need to do better at pinning teams deep in their own end (they had only 17 punts inside the 20).

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

JASON WISE FOR TSN

MARVEL SMITH

OUTLOOK

As one might guess with a team that just won the Super Bowl, the Rams do not have many glaring needs, and picking at No. 31 does not guarantee them a glamour player. St. Louis did not have a lot of key free agents, which means the core of this team will be together next season. That will allow it to draft with the best-athlete-available philosophy.

The Rams have responded to the free-agency losses of C Mark Gruttadauria and Miller from within by penciling in Andy McCollom and Tucker, respectively, in their places. Still, losing Miller was a big hit. It may be a stretch if the Rams were to draft a tackle such as Arizona State's Marvel Smith in the first round, but Smith has natural feet and strength and could become a mainstay on an NFL offensive line.

They also could look at a quality cover corner, a safety with range or, possibly, a defensive tackle. A player such as Boston College DT Chris Hovan, a tough, hard-nosed guy, might be a nice fit. Farr and Agnew are starting to age, and Hovan could give the Rams a nice, three-man interior rotation. Hovan is a tough overachiever who would bring intensity to the defense.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Kurt Warner	Trent Green
FB	Robert Holcombe	James Hodgins
RB	Marshall Faulk	Justin Watson
WR	Isaac Bruce	Ricky Proehl
WR	Torry Holt	Az-Zahir Hakim
TE	Ernie Conwell	Roland Williams
LT	Orlando Pace	Todd Frohbieter
LG	Tom Nutten	Cameron Spikes
C	Andy McCollum	Tom Nutten
RG	Adam Timmerman	Cameron Spikes
RT	Ryan Tucker	Todd Frohbieter

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Mike Horan*	K	Jeff Wilkins

DEFENSE

LE	Kevin Carter	Lionel Barnes
LT	Ray Agnew	Jeff Zgonina
RT	D'Marco Farr	Nate Hobgood
RE	Grant Wistrom	Lionel Barnes
LOLB	Mike Jones	Troy Pelshak
MLB	London Fletcher	Lorenzo Styles
ROLB	Todd Collins	Leonard Little
LC	Todd Lyght	Taje Allen
SS	Billy Jenkins	Rich Coady
FS	Devin Bush	Keith Lyle
RC	Dexter McCleon	Dre' Bly

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

San Diego CHARGERS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Led by Bobby Beathard, the Chargers run one of the most unique front offices in the NFL. Although the Chargers have suffered on the field recently and Beathard has received more than his share of criticism, he is still a shrewd judge of talent and is not afraid to make a move when he likes a player. He relies on instincts and hunches, and if he really likes a player, he will give up whatever it takes to get him.

Beathard never has put a lot of value in first-round picks and trades them away almost every year. Beathard has a loyal scouting staff that knows exactly what he wants, and coaches are moderately involved in decisions. One of Beathard's quirks is that he does not go into the draft with a lot of names. The Chargers focus on 25-to-30 players and concentrate more on who they want than on what other teams are doing. They literally could go into draft day with 25 names on a 3x5 card and draft from that card. Many teams spend a lot of time worrying about missing a player or being embarrassed, rather than concentrating on getting players they like. That is certainly not the case with the Chargers.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

WR: There is some talent here, especially with the signing of Curtis Conway. But the Chargers still need a big-play threat to line up in multiple-receiver sets. Jeff Graham had an outstanding '99, considering the lack of talent around him, and a healthy Charlie Jones should help. The team keeps waiting for Mikhael Ricks to explode, but it hasn't happened in two seasons. Tight end Freddie Jones masks some of the deficiencies here.

CB: Injuries made the secondary a disaster area last season. The return of hard-hitting SS Rodney Harrison will help, and the addition of free-agent signee DeRon Jenkins and the development of Fakhir Brown are good signs. But both corner positions are question marks that the team may well address.

DE: The biggest surprise of last season was the emergence of Raylee Johnson as a pass rusher. He is a great fit as a nickel rush end, but the Chargers need better play against the run on the edges. They also would like an upgrade athletically from journeyman Albert Fontenot, a free agent, but he could be re-signed if they don't draft a replacement. Finding a pair of capable run-stoppers will be difficult.

G: The Chargers were not expecting Aaron Taylor's retirement and must scramble to find a replacement. DeMingo Graham works in San Diego's power running scheme, but his footwork needs to improve. This position would have been a weak spot if C Roman Fortin was not retained. His intelligence and quickness help the guards.

RB: The carries were distributed evenly last season, mostly the result of Natrone Means' injuries, but the committee approach is not ideal for any team. Terrell Fletcher should continue in his third-down role, but the Chargers need to decide on one big back to carry the load. Despite running against stacked defenses, rookie Jermaine Fazande was the most impressive back. He does not have the big-play ability that a young Means once did, but he can move a pile and pick up tough yards inside.

FS: Mike Dumas' days in San Diego may be over. Unless the Chargers give in to his contract demands, the team will look for its third free safety in two years. When healthy, Dumas and Harrison formed the league's most intimidating deep combination, but injuries prevented that from happening much last season.

MLB: The Chargers are a team with too many marginal veterans playing key roles on defense. Eric Hill is a prime example. The once-tough run defender probably can go only one more year before the team will need a replacement.

OLB: Junior Seau has spoiled fans with his free-lancing style and continues to take over games, but he is entering his 11th season and the Chargers must consider an eventual replacement. Lew Bush is a steady player who rarely makes mistakes. Versatile backup Gerald Dixon provides a nice pass-rush threat, and speedster Michael Hamilton shows signs of gaining a better grasp of the position.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

DELTHA O'NEAL

JOHN CORDES FOR TSN

OUTLOOK

One of Beathard's miscalculations cost the Chargers their top pick this year, which would have been 13th overall. San Diego is almost certain to take defensive help in the second round (No. 44 overall), but you can never tell with this front office.

The Chargers have made some interesting moves over the years because Beathard always is looking for ways to maneuver, but he probably will stay put this season and address the cornerback spot. Since the end of the season, Charles Dimry has retired and negotiations with Darryll Lewis stalled, leaving the Chargers to sign Jenkins. Talented guys who could slide are Florida State's Mario Edwards and California's Deltha O'Neal. Edwards is a tough competitor with good enough feet to match up in coverage, but he grabs too much and needs to add upper-body strength. The versatility of O'Neal, who also can be used on return teams, has captured the team's attention. The Chargers also could select from a talented group of receivers, including Florida's Darrell Jackson, Arizona's Dennis Northcutt and Arkansas' Anthony Lucas.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jim Harbaugh	Ryan Leaf
FB	Fred McCrary	Kenny Bynum
RB	Natrone Means	Jermaine Fazande
WR	Curtis Conway	Mikhael Ricks
WR	Jeff Graham	Charlie Jones
TE	Freddie Jones	Reggie Davis
LT	John Jackson	Raleigh Roundtree
LG	DeMingo Graham	Wilbert Brown
C	Roman Fortin	Kendyl Jacox
RG	Kendyl Jacox	Wilbert Brown
RT	Vaughn Parker	Raleigh Roundtree

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Darren Bennett*	K	John Carney

DEFENSE

LE	Al Fontenot*	Michael Mohring
LT	Jamal Williams	Adrian Dingle
RT	John Parrella	Michael Mohring
RE	Raylee Johnson	Cedric Harden
LOLB	Lew Bush	Gerald Dixon*
MLB	Eric Hill	Orlando Ruff
ROLB	Junior Seau	Michael Hamilton
LC	DeRon Jenkins	Darryll Lewis*
SS	Rodney Harrison	Jason Perry
FS	Mike Dumas*	Reggie Rusk
RC	Fakhir Brown	Jimmy Spencer

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

San Francisco 49ERS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The 49ers have huge salary-cap problems, and it will be difficult for them to compete in free agency. No matter how well they evaluate players, they can't afford to sign them. They will have to hope for a great draft and may have the ability to sign some low-level free agents who hit it big on the field.

It's difficult to assess where the organization is in terms of its front office and personnel department. G.M. Bill Walsh currently is running the show, but rumors are rampant that he will give up a lot of his responsibilities for a variety of personal reasons. It's unclear where that would put Terry Donahue, who currently is running the personnel department but still learning the ins and outs of the NFL. Coach Steve Mariucci appears to be in the inner circle of the team's ownership, and he may have a bigger say in personnel decisions than in the past. The 49ers have a solid, veteran scouting staff led by Jim Gruden, who has overseen the last couple of drafts. It is thorough in its evaluation and preparation.

Overall, however, there are too many changes and too much instability going on in the organization to feel good about the immediate future.

TEAM NEEDS

QB: The immediate future of this position hinges on the return or departure of Steve Young, but it's clear the 49ers need to address the quarterback situation this offseason. Walsh still believes in Jeff Garcia's ability, but the up-and-down performance by Garcia last season was more indicative of a backup-type player.

CB: The rotating door here was the team's biggest weakness in '99. The number of starting combinations at cornerback almost tripled the win total. Mark McMillian and Darnell Walker were too small. R.W. McQuarters and Craig Newsome were too slow. Pierson Prioleau may be better suited for safety. Defensive coordinator Jim Mora Jr. will oversee the position next season, and he desperately could use some size and speed to work with.

DE: No team got as little production at this position as the 49ers did last season. Charles Haley's retirement and Marvin Washington's release leaves Junior Bryant, Gabe Wilkins, Jeff Posey and sophomore Chike Okeafor as the holdovers. The team re-signed Bryant, who probably is a better inside player. Wilkins plays the run well, but his impact on passing downs was nonexistent. Okeafor is an intriguing pass-rush specialist but is basically nothing more than a third-down player. The unit needs more impact plays from better impact players.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

SS: The release of longtime starter Tim McDonald leaves a huge void. For now, Prioleau is the listed starter. Zack Bronson has good size and can play over the tight end, but the club is not sure if he has the instincts to hold up as a starter. Bronson will have to emerge like FS Lance Schulters did last season in order for the pass defense to turn around.

OLB: The team didn't think Anthony Peterson was a long-term solution so Joe Wesley, a special teams player last season, will get the chance to replace Lee Woodall (released). Ken Norton Jr., the other outside linebacker, isn't getting any younger, and there's not a lot of depth. The defense is one of the slowest in the league and could use some young legs.

OT: Jeremy Newberry didn't pan out at right tackle last season, which forced the team to use Derrick Deese, its best interior lineman, outside. That was a waste of talent. LT Dave Fiore is adequate when he's healthy, but that hasn't been too often the past couple of years. The roster is loaded with some young, talented linemen, but they are better suited to play guard or center. The 49ers could use help at both tackles.

RB: This is clearly a position of strength. Charlie Garner, who carried the load when the passing game faltered last season, is more than a capable starter and would resume that role if Garrison Hearst has not recovered from the leg injury that kept him out for the entire '99 season. Fred Beasley and Terry Jackson are a formidable fullback combination.

WR: If Jerry Rice lands elsewhere, look for Tai Streets to emerge in the three-receiver sets. Terrell Owens' production slipped last season, and he must rebound. J.J. Stokes is a capable starter, but he should be more effective considering his skills.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

CHAD PENNINGTON

CRAIG MELVIN FOR TSN

OUTLOOK

The 49ers always are looking to make a move. San Francisco made a bold maneuver by dealing its No. 3 pick to Washington for the Redskins' Nos. 12 and 24 selections along with two mid-round picks. It gives the 49ers three extra selections and moves them into an area where their needs and value are better fits.

San Francisco needs to find a quarterback of the future, but it would have been a reach to tab Marshall's Chad Pennington or Louisville's Chris Redman with the No. 3 pick. OLB LaVar Arrington and DE Courtney Brown of Penn State would have been good choices at No. 3, but neither would fill the team's most pressing needs. At No. 12, the 49ers have a chance to get Pennington or Redman, where they should be picked (or at least closer to it).

With the No. 24 selection, the team can address the secondary with a cornerback such as Jackson State's Rashard Anderson or Tennessee's Dwayne Goodrich. A defensive end such as Kansas State's Darren Howard or Virginia Tech's John Engelberger also is a strong possibility.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Steve Young	Jeff Garcia
FB	Fred Beasley	Terry Jackson
RB	Garrison Hearst	Charlie Garner
WR	Jerry Rice	Tai Streets
WR	Terrell Owens	J.J. Stokes
TE	Greg Clark	Shonn Bell
LT	Dave Fiore	Dan Dercher
LG	Ray Brown	Phil Ostrowski
C	Chris Dalman	Ben Lynch
RG	Jeremy Newberry	Dwane Ledford
RT	Derrick Deese	Jason Tenner

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Chad Stanley	K	Wade Richey

DEFENSE

LE	Junior Bryant	Jeff Posey
LT	Bryant Young	
RT	Reggie McGrew	
RE	Gabe Wilkins	Chike Okeafor
LOLB	Joe Wesley	Jeff Posey
MLB	Winfred Tubbs	
ROLB	Ken Norton	
LC	Monty Montgomery	Anthony Parker
SS	Pierson Prioleau	Zack Bronson
FS	Lance Schulters	Zack Bronson
RC	Ramos McDonald	R.W. McQuarters

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Seattle SEAHAWKS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Entering his second season, Mike Holmgren is beginning to shape the front office. He's adapting well to his dual role as head coach/G.M.

Holmgren will miss Randy Mueller, who left to be G.M. of the Saints, but he has trusted aides Ted Thompson, who handles pro personnel, and John Dorsey, who manages college scouting and the draft. Holmgren brought both men from Green Bay. Holmgren has the final say in all decisions but values the opinions of those around him.

Despite a lot of change, the Seahawks have done a commendable job in the draft and free agency in recent years. As a result, this team has talent. Holmgren brought most of his Green Bay coaching staff with him to Seattle. He has an owner who gives him freedom to make the required moves. If there's an advantage to having one person in control, it's the fact Holmgren has nobody directly above him to answer to about his decisions. However, wearing a variety of hats in today's NFL isn't an easy task. It will be interesting to see if Holmgren can manage it; the guess is he probably will.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

WR: Holmgren flexed his muscle with Joey Galloway and made the tough decision not to bring him back. The first-round pick received from Dallas in exchange for Galloway probably will be used to take an impact receiver, although the re-signing of Derrick Mayes makes that situation less urgent. With Mayes, Sean Dawkins and possibly a rookie first-rounder, QB Jon Kitna should have plenty of good targets.

G: The team will have a difficult time replacing salary-cap casualty Brian Habib. With Pete Kendall entrenched on the left side, Seattle must find a serviceable player at right guard. The coaching staff isn't confident anyone on the roster at the end of last season is capable.

MLB: DeShone Myles was hurt for much of last season and replaced in the middle by Anthony Simmons. Myles is expected back but lacks the size to hold up in traffic. In a division that features bruising inside runners such as Terrell Davis, Tyrone Wheatley and Natrone Means, the Seahawks can't afford to be undersized here.

TE: The success of Holmgren's West Coast offense is largely dependent upon big contributions from the tight end. Christian Fauria doesn't run well enough to stretch defenses, and Itula Mili never has fulfilled his promise. If Holmgren has his way, both would slide down the depth chart to make room for a legitimate starter.

C: Like Habib, Kevin Glover was a salary-cap casualty. Seattle's lack of depth along the line could force it to start a marginal veteran or inexperienced rookie.

RT: Grant Williams struggled last season, and even if he returns, he'll probably be a backup. Floyd Wedderburn could become the starter, but the Seahawks would like to do better. Look for Seattle to have three new starters on the line next season.

CB: Shawn Springs and Willie Williams form the AFC's top corner duo. Chris Canty, a former No. 1 pick of the Patriots, stepped in for injured Fred Thomas and proved capable in the nickel package. But Thomas followed Mueller to New Orleans, further depleting depth.

OLB: The team thinks Simmons is ready for full-time duty, which cushions the loss of playmaker Darrin Smith. Seattle's only concern is Simmons won't be able to cover like Smith, but he's instinctive enough to compensate for his lack of experience. A backup must be added to assume Simmons' old role.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

SYLVESTER MORRIS

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

OUTLOOK

The Seahawks will have plenty of options with their two first-round picks. Seattle, which holds the Nos. 19 and 22 selections, could package the picks to move up and take a receiver such as Michigan State's Plaxico Burress. Or the team could stay put and take a player such as Jackson State's Sylvester Morris or Florida's Travis Taylor. The odds of Burress being available are slim.

The right tackle position was a disaster last season, so the coaching staff may choose to address that situation. Mississippi's Todd Wade is a mammoth guy who has the frame to add bulk. Arizona State junior Marvel Smith is athletic enough to play both tackle positions.

Though Holmgren is an offensive-minded coach, he recognizes the deficiencies in his defense. With their first pick, the Seahawks could select BYU run-stuffing LB Rob Morris. He is the top inside linebacker in the draft and can hold up at the point of attack and make plays. The team has been undersized at this position for too long.

If Morris isn't available when they use their second first-round pick, the Seahawks could select swift Tennessee OLB Raynoch Thompson. He would fit the bill as a best athlete available.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Jon Kitna	Glenn Foley
FB	Mack Strong	Brian Milne*
RB	Ricky Watters	Ahman Green
WR	Sean Dawkins	Mike Pritchard
WR	Derrick Mayes	Karsten Bailey
TE	Christian Fauria	Itula Mili
LT	Walter Jones	Grant Williams*
LG	Pete Kendall	Greg Bloedorn
C	Chris Gray	Frank Beede*
RG	Todd Weiner	Greg Bloedorn
RT	Floyd Wedderburn	Grant Williams*

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Jeff Feagles	K	Todd Peterson

DEFENSE

LE	Michael Sinclair	Matt LaBounty
LT	Sam Adams*	Riddick Parker
RT	Cortez Kennedy	Antonio Cochran
RE	Lamar King	Matt LaBounty
LOLB	Chad Brown	Anthony Simmons
MLB	DeShone Myles	Anthony Simmons
ROLB	James Logan	Anthony Simmons
LC	Shawn Springs	Chris Canty
SS	Reggie Tongue	Kerry Joseph
FS	Jay Bellamy	Kerry Joseph
RC	Willie Williams	Chris Canty

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Tampa Bay BUCCANEERS

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

STOCKAR McDOUGLE

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

General manager Rich McKay is quickly becoming one of the most respected executives in the league. He and coach Tony Dungy work well together in an understated, non-ego environment.

The Bucs have concentrated more on the draft than in free agency to build an outstanding young team. Tampa has been especially effective in recent years in the early rounds. Led by personnel director Jerry Angelo, the front office doesn't make a lot of mistakes. The team puts a premium on speed and athleticism. As a result, they are an excellent matchup team, especially at the skill positions.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

The Bucs know their own and everybody else's needs. As a result, they have a handle on how players will come off the board. For years, Tampa Bay seemed to make mistakes on first-round picks, but that's no longer the case. Dungy, who puts a premium on character, has a chance to bolster his team with two first-round picks.

The coaches have moderate input into personnel decisions, but everybody has a chance to express an opinion. Still, the final decision rests with McKay, Dungy and Angelo. They have a strong scouting department that works well with the coaching staff.

TEAM NEEDS

RT: The Bucs could enter the season with Jerry Wunsch or Jason Odom here, but that's not a pleasant thought for Dungy. Their styles are contrasting, with Wunsch boasting power and Odom finesse, but the results are the same. Neither player can adequately protect quarterback Shaun King.

WR: This is a perpetual sore spot. It was hard to assess the unit after King took over because he rarely threw downfield, but the wideouts weren't getting separation. Jacquez Green was the most productive, but he's suited for the slot. The Bucs need to add a perimeter threat who can provide a greater impact than Reidel Anthony and Bert Emanuel—which shouldn't be hard.

G: Frank Middleton is average at right guard and former Viking Randall McDaniel, the new left guard, is an 11-time Pro Bowl player who is 35 and going into his 13th season. Jorge Diaz and Kevin Dogins, who split starting time on the left side last year, are reserve types who don't belong on a top-flight line.

QB: The release of Trent Dilfer and the emergence of King sets the team's future. Backup Eric Zeier is an unrestricted free agent who might leave to contend for a starting job, which would put the Bucs in a squeeze to find a capable veteran willing to sit behind a guy who's still learning the ropes.

TE: This position has become more of a priority now that King is entrenched at quarterback. Tampa is comfortable with Dave Moore as its starter because he's a dependable blocker who works hard to get open underneath. Neither Patrick Hape nor John Davis offers much in the passing game. The Bucs would like to add a capable pass catcher who will allow them to increase their formation variation in the middle of the field.

LT: The late-season broken leg suffered by Paul Gruber likely will put an end to his career, forcing the Bucs to scramble for a replacement. Gruber's aging legs prevented him from sliding in pass protection, so the team shouldn't have trouble finding a substitute. But look for Tampa to add an experienced player.

RB: Mike Alstott's role as a runner expanded last season at the expense of Warrick Dunn, who has become a third-down specialist. This rare power/speed package wasn't used properly last season and should produce more like Tyrone Wheatley and Napoleon Kaufman did in Oakland. The Bucs never did replace bruising fullback Lorenzo Neal last season, and they also could use another halfback.

C: Instead of re-signing Tony Mayberry, the Bucs picked up Vikings free agent Jeff Christy. He's a few years younger and brings better mobility and intelligence to the position. It was a decision Dungy didn't want, but he did the correct thing.

OUTLOOK

With two selections in the first round (Nos. 13 and 27), the Bucs have a chance to fill pressing needs. Look for them to focus on the offensive line and receivers early in the draft.

Expect Tampa to tab an offensive tackle at No. 13, possibly Oklahoma's Stockar McDougle, a fast-rising talent. Alabama's Chris Samuels is another possibility. However, if a receiver like Michigan State's Plaxico Burress drops to No. 13, Tampa could grab him and get a tackle at No. 27. It will be interesting to see if there's a quality wideout available at 27 if the Bucs wait that long. It's conceivable that wideouts like Jackson State's Sylvester Morris, Florida's Travis Taylor and Georgia Tech's Dez White could be gone by then. A name to watch is Florida State's Ron Dugans, who may be one of the most disciplined and fundamentally sound receivers in this draft.

Although there probably will be rumors about the Bucs packaging their picks to trade up, it's unlikely. They can fill their needs with the picks they have.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Shaun King	Eric Zeier*
FB	Mike Alstott	Kevin McLeod
RB	Warrick Dunn	Rabih Abdullah
WR	Bert Emanuel	Reidel Anthony
WR	Jacquez Green	Karl Williams
TE	Dave Moore*	Patrick Hape
LT	Paul Gruber*	Pete Pierson
LG	Randall McDaniel	Jorge Diaz
C	Jeff Christy	Todd Washington
RG	Frank Middleton	Ken Blackman
RT	Jerry Wunsch	Jason Odom*

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Mark Royals*	K	Martin Gramatica

DEFENSE

LE	Chidi Ahanotu	Tyoka Jackson
LT	Brad Culpepper	James Cannida
RT	Warren Sapp	A. MacFarland
RE	Steve White	Marcus Jones
LOLB	Derrick Brooks	Jeff Gooch
MLB	Jamie Duncan	Don Davis*
ROLB	Shelton Quarles	Al Singleton
LC	Donnie Abraham	Floyd Young
SS	John Lynch	Dexter Jackson
FS	Damien Robinson	Shevin Smith
RC	Ronde Barber	Brian Kelly

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Tennessee TITANS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

The Titans have quietly assembled one of the NFL's best rosters. G.M. Floyd Reese leads the club in all phases and probably doesn't receive enough credit. The Titans have a strong, veteran scouting staff, led by director of college scouting Glenn Cumbee. The staff has been together for a long time, is thorough and rarely misses on a player.

The Titans are particularly effective in scouting small schools and in their middle- to late-round picks. They put a premium on speed and athletic ability, and usually they are an excellent matchup team. It is not a deep scouting staff, nor is it the most visible group in the NFL, but its members quietly go about their jobs and are prepared on draft day. The Titans appear to have a handle on their roster and identifying their needs. The coaches and scouts work well together, and all have solid input into personnel decisions.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

TEAM NEEDS

WR: QB Steve McNair takes much of the blame for the team's inability to pass downfield, but his receivers' failure to get separation is part of the problem. That the Titans had to start Isaac Byrd in the Super Bowl is enough proof to justify the need for an upgrade. A string of poor drafts at this position has caught up with the Titans, and they need to upgrade.

FS: Many team insiders think Anthony Dorsett is ready to take over for starter Marcus Robertson. The problem is that Robertson, who was re-signed in February, is a proven veteran and Dorsett is an unknown quantity as a full-time player. If the Titans go with Dorsett and he's not the answer, they will have big problems in the secondary. They may need to draft another safety, just in case.

CB: Samari Rolle's ball skills are among the best in the league and will earn him Pro Bowl status in the future, but the rest of this young group is not up to standards. If it weren't for the pressure provided by the front four, the young cornerbacks would be a glaring weakness. Denard Walker, the other starter, has learned to play off receivers, but his finesse style might be better suited for a nickel role. This group is a collection of mid-round picks who still are learning the position. Though it's not a real need area, a solid veteran who understands the intricacies of the position would help.

RB: Regardless of Eddie George's bruising, tireless, track record, the team can't depend on him to stay injury-free forever. Backup Rodney Thomas is an intelligent player who understands his role, but a younger player who can double as a fullback would be a valuable addition.

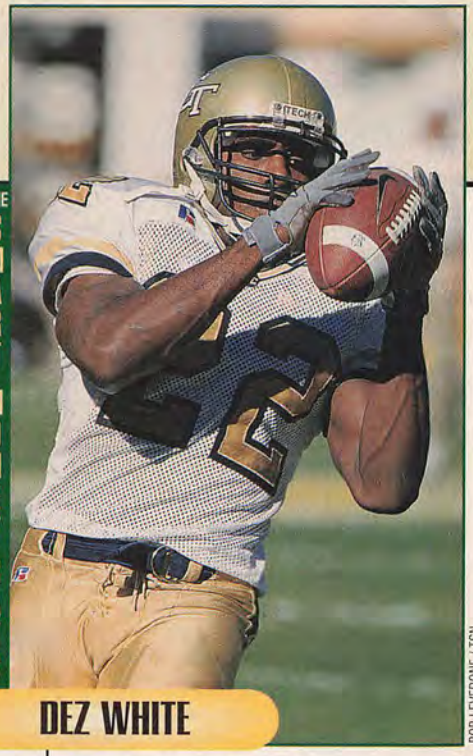
TE: Jackie Harris and Frank Wycheck form one of the NFL's best pass-catching tandems, but Harris is entering his 11th season and Wycheck is more of an H-back. Michael Roan gives the Titans versatility (he can play fullback), but they need to start thinking about a top-flight replacement for Harris.

MLB: Barron Wortham won his starting job back by default in training camp last season when the coaches moved Joe Bowden back outside, but Wortham doesn't seem to fit into the team's plans in 2000, at least in his current capacity. The signing of ex-Cowboy Randall Godfrey will allow the Titans to be even more aggressive.

RT: The Titans never should have allowed mammoth Jon Runyan to bolt for Philadelphia in free agency. He was a key ingredient to their ground game, and it's difficult to replace a solid, all-around tackle. To fill Runyan's spot, Tennessee signed Rams free agent Fred Miller, who must have impressed the Titans more with his performance in the Super Bowl than his effort in an October 31 regular-season game, when he was penalized six times for false starts. Scott Sanderson, who spent most of the '99 season on injured reserve, is considered nothing but a backup.

QB: Neil O'Donnell, who led the team to a 4-1 record last season when McNair missed five games because of a back injury, returns after a free-agency flirtation with Tampa Bay. That solidifies the position—giving Tennessee a strong, 1-2 punch—and drops it way down on the need list. Kevin Daft, a fifth-round pick last year, is an athletic project who needs seasoning.

THE SMART MONEY SAYS



DEZ WHITE

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

OUTLOOK

Reese would be wise to surround McNair with more talent on the perimeter. As much as the Titans hate to admit it, their receivers are among the worst in the league. Yancey Thigpen is average, and Kevin Dyson doesn't take advantage of his size. Jackson State's Sylvester Morris and Florida State's Laveranues Coles are too raw to contribute in 2000. Georgia Tech's Dez White would be a perfect fit, if he is available when the Titans pick 30th. White has the deep speed Tennessee needs and has the size to create mismatches with some of the NFL's smaller corners. Florida State's Ron Dugans, West Virginia's Jerry Porter and USC's R. Jay Soward also could be options.

If the Titans decide to go for an offensive lineman, they might consider Tennessee G Cosey Coleman. Ageless wonder Bruce Matthews has to retire sometime, and second-year player Zach Piller is the only suitable replacement on the roster.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Steve McNair	Neil O'Donnell
FB	Lorenzo Neal	
RB	Eddie George	Rodney Thomas
WR	Yancey Thigpen	Joey Kent
WR	Kevin Dyson	Isaac Byrd
TE	Frank Wycheck	Jackie Harris*
LT	Brad Hopkins	Jason Mathews
LG	Bruce Matthews	Zach Piller
C	Kevin Long	Bruce Matthews
RG	Benji Olson	Zach Piller
RT	Fred Miller	Scott Sanderson

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Craig Hentrich	K	Al Del Greco

DEFENSE

LE	Jevon Kearse	Mike Jones
LT	John Thornton	Joe Salave'a
RT	Jason Fisk	Joe Salave'a
RE	Kenny Holmes	Henry Ford
LOLB	Eddie Robinson	Phil Glover
MLB	Randall Godfrey	Barron Wortham
ROLB	Joe Bowden*	Terry Killens*
LC	Denard Walker	Dainon Sydney
SS	Blaine Bishop	Perry Phenix
FS	Marcus Robertson	Anthony Dorsett*
RC	Samari Rolle	Donald Mitchell

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

Washington REDSKINS

DRAFT PHILOSOPHY

Thanks to the maneuvers of former G.M. Charley Casserly, the Redskins have a chance to hit the lottery in this draft with multiple selections in the first round. In a division that doesn't have a clear front-runner, they can take a huge jump to the head of the class in the 2000 season if they are wise with their picks.

With Casserly gone, Vinny Cerrato runs the personnel department. Cerrato has a lot of experience from his days with the 49ers, and he and owner Daniel Snyder seem to be on the same page. Snyder likely will be in the mold of Jerry Jones—an owner who will be heavily involved in all personnel decisions and will pull the trigger on potential deals any time, anywhere. Snyder already started maneuvering at the scouting combine, when he sent the 12th and 24th picks of the first round (plus two lower-round picks) to San Francisco for the third pick overall. Don't be surprised if he keeps dealing.

Norv Turner and his coaching staff have moderate input into the draft and appear to be on more stable ground after the team's success in '99. The Redskins have a veteran scouting staff with a lot of experience, but they have somewhat of an unorthodox front office; many roles seem to overlap, and job descriptions don't always seem to be well-defined from the outside looking in. Look for Snyder to be an active voice in this draft. There will be a perception coming out of Washington that he is the real general manager of the Redskins.

TEAM NEEDS

LDE: The Redskins need another impact player—they signed Bills free-agent DE Bruce Smith—to improve an average front seven. They'll have the opportunity to land one—say, Penn State's Courtney Brown—in the first round. Brown could supplant returning starter Marco Coleman. An improved pass rush would allow the cornerbacks to gamble much more.

LT: Andy Heck performed better than the team hoped, but his problems against top speed rushers exposed QB Brad Johnson's immobility. The team will focus on getting a younger player with better feet in pass protection. If they can get another steady player such as Jon Jansen, the offensive line would be set.

MLB: Derek Smith's lack of size became an issue when opponents continually exploited the Redskins' soft middle. Smith belongs back outside, where he started for two seasons.

OLB: The defense lacks outside playmakers, and the projected move of Smith outside would leave one spot open. Shawn Barber makes plays, but he also gives up too many. The team is in dire need of a pass-rushing outside linebacker.

CB: Despite some inconsistency, rookie Champ Bailey was as good as advertised in '99. He will carry on the tradition that Darrell Green has set forth for 17 years. Green continues to defy age and proved he still can run when he chased down Lions WR Germane Crowell from behind, but he can't go on forever. The team doesn't have a player worth grooming for a starting spot.

WR: Snyder wants to add an elite player to start opposite Michael Westbrook. Albert Connell had a 1,000-yard season, but most scouts agree he doesn't show up every week, and his concentration lapses often stall drives. Irving Fryar is a decent underneath option, and he would like to return for one more season. Depth is a huge concern.

FB: The key will be getting back Larry Bowie, who missed all but two games in '99 because of injury. Bowie is a tenacious lead blocker, and the re-signing of Larry Centers offsets his deficiencies as a runner and receiver. Bowie's health and Centers' age (32 in June) are concerns.

G: Tre' Johnson and Keith Sims form one of the top inside tandems in the NFL, and Rod Milstead and Brad Badger provide great depth. Both have seen extensive starting duty, and the staff is comfortable when they are pressed into the lineup. Sims and Milstead are entering their 11th and ninth seasons in the league, respectively. The team could tap an athletic project with a late pick.

INSIDE THE WAR ROOM

THE SMART MONEY SAYS

PAUL NISELY / TSN

LaVAR ARRINGTON

OUTLOOK

Casserly left Washington with three first-round picks (Nos. 2, 12 and 24). After the deal with the 49ers the team is left with two of the first three selections in this year's draft. Still, the Redskins may not be done dealing.

Most of the team's needs are on defense. Speedy, athletic pass rushers are the top priorities. DE Brown and OLB LaVar Arrington of Penn State would be good fits. With Bruce Smith already on board, the Redskins could bring lots of heat on passers with athletes such as Brown and Arrington coming off the edges.

If Cleveland surprises and takes Brown or Arrington, Washington would have the option of taking Florida State WR Peter Warrick, who would look good in tandem with Westbrook in the team's wide-open offense. Another player to watch is Alabama OT Chris Samuels, whom the Redskins love. They could take Samuels and Arrington and pass on Brown. Or, they could swap the third pick for a slightly lower first-round choice, plus an additional pick or two, and hope to select Samuels in that lower slot.

If Washington hits on both picks in the first round, it would have the top talent in the NFC East.

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	Brad Johnson	Rodney Peete
FB	Larry Centers	Larry Bowie
RB	Stephen Davis	Skip Hicks
WR	Albert Connell	Irving Fryar
WR	Michael Westbrook	James Thrash
TE	Stephen Alexander	James Jenkins
LT	Andy Heck*	Derek Smith
LG	Keith Sims	Rod Milstead*
C	Cory Raymer	Mark Fischer
RG	Tre' Johnson	Brad Badger
RT	Jon Jansen	Jamie Brown*

SPECIAL TEAMS

P	Matt Turk	K	Brett Conway

DEFENSE

LE	Marco Coleman	Anthony Cook
LT	Dan Wilkinson	Doug Brown
RT	Dana Stubblefield	Doug Brown
RE	Bruce Smith	Kenard Lang
LOLB	Greg Jones	James Francis
MLB	Derek Smith	Kurt Gouveia*
ROLB	Shawn Barber	Eddie Mason
LC	Champ Bailey	Mark McMillian*
SS	Sam Shade	Darryl Pounds*
FS	Mark Carrier	Leomont Evans
RC	Darrell Green	Tim Denton

■–Can play for any team ■–Solid player
■–Fringe player *Unrestricted free agent.

GRADING THE DRAFTS

TSN ranks the NFL teams based on their performance in the draft over the last five years

1 TAMPA BAY BUCS

The team's steady climb in the NFC is a reflection of consistently strong drafts. Aside from now-departed MLB Hardy Nickerson, its dominant defense was built through keen moves that fit its aggressive system. The only position the team seems to misfire on is wide receiver.

BEST PICK: Warren Sapp, DT (D1a-95). Although he undoubtedly was the best player in the country, a positive drug test prevented Sapp from going in the top 10. Sapp uses his hands better than any inside player in the league, and his positive attitude and leadership skills have dispelled all character questions.

WORST PICK: Reidel Anthony, WR (D1b-97). After the light appeared to go on in '98, Anthony regressed badly last season, rarely displaying the vertical ability that got him drafted so high.

BEST CLASS: '95. The Bucs secured the building blocks of their defense, getting both DT Warren Sapp and LB Derrick Brooks in a pivotal first round. Although no other player remains on the roster, nabbing two potential Hall of Famers was outstanding.

WORST CLASS: '98. Without a No. 1 pick, the Bucs failed to land a top-flight player. WR Jacquez Green is a complementary player and CB Brian Kelly contributes in nickel packages. LB Jamie Duncan has a chance to be good when he takes over for Nickerson this year.

BEST VALUE: Donnie Abraham, CB (D3-96). One of the league's most underrated corners, Abraham doesn't get many opportunities to showcase his man-to-man cover skills in Tampa's zone-heavy defensive scheme.

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	8	9	10	7	9
Starters	2	2	5	1	2
Backups	0	2	2	5	2
Other team	2	1	1	0	3
Out of NFL	4	4	2	1	2

BIGGEST STEAL: Mike Alstott, RB (D2-96). Alstott's heavy workload in college hasn't caught up with him yet. He has good-enough feet to avoid the big shot and his punishing style fits the Bucs' ball-control attack.

BIGGEST REACH: Regan Upshaw, DE (D1a-96). With the 12th overall pick, Tampa should have gone for Duane Clemons, Upshaw's college teammate, who is a solid edge rusher for the Vikings. Upshaw is currently an unrestricted free agent.

BIGGEST BUST: Jerry Wunsch, T (D2-97). Wunsch is a massive mauler who excelled in Wisconsin's run-oriented system. But his poor feet and inability to slide in pass protection land him No. 2 on the depth chart.

2 JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

Coach Tom Coughlin should get more credit for knowing his personnel and recognizing players who fit his system. The Jaguars' plan to build through the draft has put them way ahead of the Carolina franchise.

BEST PICK: Tony Brackens, DE (D2a-96). Brackens' athleticism fits perfectly in the Jags' system because he can rush the passer, play the run and drop into coverage. He had a Pro Bowl season in '99.

WORST PICK: Michael Cheever, C (D2b-96). The team could have landed a competent snapper in the later rounds but felt Cheever was worthy of a high pick. Back problems forced him out of the league.

BEST CLASS: '96. Jacksonville landed three of the best young defenders in the game. Outside LB Kevin Hardy is an all-around force, Brackens is always around the quarterback and Aaron Beasley is an excellent cover man who supports the run like few cornerbacks can. Reggie Barlow, who has been outstanding on returns, is developing into a nice No. 3 receiver.

WORST CLASS: '97. DE Renaldo Wynn is a versatile, blue-collar player but doesn't do enough to warrant being a first-round pick. Injuries have stunted S Mike Logan's development, and James Hamilton never contended at outside linebacker. TE Damon Jones and FB Daimon Shelton saved this class from being a disaster.

BEST VALUE: Shelton (D6-97). He is the key to Jacksonville's balance on offense. His lead blocking and ability to pick up the blitz keep the chains moving.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	10	10	7	11	8
Starters	1	3	3	3	1
Backups	2	1	2	2	6
Other team	4	3	0	2	0
Out of NFL	3	3	2	4	1

BIGGEST STEAL: Acquiring a No. 1 and a No. 4 in '98 for QB Rob Johnson. The Jags took RBs Fred Taylor, the league's most explosive runner when he is healthy, and Tavian Banks, whose career is in doubt after a pair of damaging knee injuries.

BIGGEST REACH: Wynn. He was overrated after a solid career at Notre Dame. After playing tackle his first two years, he was moved to end last season and held up fairly well.

BIGGEST BUST: Brian DeMarco, G (D2a-95). DeMarco is a big, strong guard, but his limited range has led to consistent breakdowns in pass protection. And his marginal feet make it almost impossible for him to pull successfully. He went to Cincinnati as a free agent in '99.

3 MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Aside from last year's Dimitrius Underwood saga, the team has done a sound job of approaching the draft. It has lost some of its depth in free agency, like most playoff teams do, but the young starters are strong enough to keep the Vikings near the top in the NFC.

BEST PICK: Korey Stringer, OT (D1b-95). Weight concerns scared off a lot of teams, but Stringer has kept things relatively in check. He has improved every year and is the key to the outside running game.

WORST PICK: Dimitrius Underwood, DE (D1b-99). The team could have landed DE Jevon Kearse with the 11th pick, but it's hard to argue with the selection of franchise quarterback-to-be Daunte Culpepper. It had Underwood rated just a notch below Kearse, but obviously overlooked his personal problems.

BEST CLASS: '95. DE Derrick Alexander and CB Corey Fuller were productive before leaving in free agency after the '98 season. DT Jason Fisk provides depth on Tennessee's defensive line. Stringer and FS Orlando Thomas were secured with lucrative contract extensions.

WORST CLASS: '96. DE Duane Clemons has been a consistent pass-rush threat, but the team missed badly on DT James Manley. Moe Williams has been solid on special teams, but injuries have limited his play at running back. TE Hunter Goodwin is a backup.

BEST VALUE: Tony Williams, DT (D5-97). Williams' strong performance at the Indianapolis combine convinced the Vikings that he was the defensive tackle they desperately wanted to take with this pick. He excels at getting penetration in the team's one-gap system.

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	9	6	8	8	9
Starters	1	0	2	2	1
Backups	1	2	3	1	4
Other team	4	1	2	3	0
Out of NFL	3	3	1	2	4

BIGGEST STEAL: Randy Moss, WR (D1-98). The Vikings haven't received enough credit for taking a chance on Moss after 19 other teams (Bengals twice) passed on him. Moss has the greatest physical skills of any receiver to play the game.

BIGGEST REACH: Torrian Gray, S (D2-97). An injury to starting FS Orlando Thomas gave Gray a chance to start some games as a rookie, but he didn't produce enough impact plays. He was a steady player, but the team gave up on him last season.

BIGGEST BUST: Manley (D2-96). Manley basically ate his way off the team. His lack of desire and unwillingness to adhere to a diet cost him.

Text and rankings by The War Room.

4 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Three consecutive drafts that graded from poor to average have significantly affected this team's talent level. Owner Bob Kraft needs to designate power in his draft room and clarify exactly who's calling the shots.

BEST PICK: (tie) Ted Johnson, LB (D2-95) and Lawyer Milloy, SS (D2a-96). They define the team's recent success in picking big-school players. Johnson is the heart and soul of the defense, and Milloy has the rare ability to match up either on or off the line of scrimmage.

WORST PICK: Kevin Faulk, RB (D2a-99). This was a panic move by a team desperate for help at running back. Faulk isn't durable enough to carry the load and clearly isn't the long-term answer if Robert Edwards can't make it back from reconstructive knee surgery.

BEST CLASS: '95. CB Ty Law, Johnson and RB Curtis Martin all have been Pro Bowl players. CB Jimmy Hitchcock was signed by the Panthers, C Dave Wohlabaugh starts for Cleveland and RB Dino Philyaw is hanging on in New Orleans.

WORST CLASS: '97. Not an impact player in the bunch. S Chris Carter is the lone starter, but his mental game lags behind his athletic ability. DT Brandon Mitchell and LB Vernon Crawford provide depth. Sedrick Shaw was given every chance to claim the running back job but couldn't do it.

BEST VALUE: Wohlabaugh (D4a-95). He had four productive seasons before jumping to Cleveland in free agency. Wohlabaugh isn't very strong, but he plays with good leverage and has become a tough, all-around player.

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	7	13	9	10	8
Starters	2	4	1	0	2
Backups	0	1	3	7	4
Other team	4	4	4	0	0
Out of NFL	1	4	1	3	2

BIGGEST STEAL: Martin (D3a-95). Perhaps the toughest pound-for-pound runner in the league, Martin reversed the power in the AFC East when he moved from the Patriots to the Jets. He continues to deal with injuries and stay on the field.

BIGGEST REACH: Tebucky Jones, CB (D1b-98). He has the size and athletic ability to dominate, but his lack of experience at cornerback in college was costly in terms of learning technique and angles in coverage.

BIGGEST BUST: Chris Canty, CB (D1-97). A highly overrated corner from Kansas State, Canty wasn't physical enough to seriously contend for a starting spot.

GRADE B+

5 GREEN BAY PACKERS

G.M. Ron Wolf was scrutinized for hiring Ray Rhodes, but it's hard to question his skills as a talent evaluator. However, the team must stop bringing in questionable-character guys before the locker room becomes unmanageable.

BEST PICK: Mike McKenzie, CB (D3a-99). He's the best of the three cornerbacks Green Bay took last April. Although he missed some assignments, as most rookies do, McKenzie led the team with six interceptions and should be a force for many years.

WORST PICK: Jonathan Brown, DE (D3-98). The Packers thought they had a pass-rush sleeper when they took Brown, but he never panned out and the team has given up on him—something it rarely does with higher picks.

BEST CLASS: '95. Seven players were huge contributors on their back-to-back Super Bowl clubs. The third round was classic Wolf, as he tabbed eventual big-time players in FB William Henderson, LB Brian Williams and WR Antonio Freeman. RB Travis Jervey was a Pro Bowl special teams selection in '97, and G Adam Timmerman was a steal in the seventh round; both are no longer in Green Bay.

WORST CLASS: '97. Ross Verba (first round) has struggled at left tackle after having a strong rookie year and S Darren Sharper (second) can't tackle. Not good, considering these are the only two players still on the roster from this class.

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	10	8	8	7	12
Starters	2	2	1	2	3
Backups	2	2	3	2	6
Other team	3	1	1	1	0
Out of NFL	3	3	3	2	3

BEST VALUE: Keith McKenzie LB, (D7b-96), and Timmerman (D7-95). McKenzie was the only player who could rush the passer in '99, and Timmerman played at a Pro Bowl level for the Rams.

BIGGEST STEAL: Freeman (D3d-95). Most teams were scared off by Freeman's poor 40-yard dash time, but credit the Packers for realizing he plays faster. Freeman has become Brett Favre's go-to guy.

BIGGEST REACH: Brett Conway, K (D3-97). Conway is an example of why few clubs gamble on kickers in the early rounds. A leg injury early in training camp set him back and he never could take the job from undrafted Ryan Longwell.

BIGGEST BUST: John Michels, OT (D1-96). He had unlimited potential because of his athleticism, but offensive linemen need to play with a mean streak.

GRADE B

6 MIAMI DOLPHINS

Jimmy Johnson's philosophy of trading down in order to stockpile players was a questionable one. Miami has hit on some mid- and late-round gems, but its lack of picks near the top has cost the team at running back and wide receiver.

BEST PICK: Sam Madison, CB (D2-97). Madison has had the most impressive two-year run at cornerback in the NFL. The Dolphins filled a huge need with this pick because it allowed them to be more creative with their schemes.

WORST PICK: John Avery, RB (D1b-98). Miami needed a runner, but it should have gone after someone more physical. Avery, now in Denver, was too small to be anything but a nickel back.

BEST CLASS: '97. CB Sam Madison, DE Jason Taylor and LB Derrick Rodgers are prime players on Miami's young defense. A pair of serious knee injuries probably cost WR Yatil Green, the No. 1 pick, a productive career.

WORST CLASS: '95. OL Billy Milner (No. 1) and Andrew Greene (2a) were awful selections, and late picks Corey Swinson and Shannon Myers never came close to panning out. The two good players they took, TE Pete Mitchell and DT Norman Hand, now are starting for the Giants and Saints, respectively.

BEST VALUE: Lorenzo Bromell, DT (D4a-98). Bromell sometimes plays out of control, but his contributions as a situational edge rusher are vital to Miami's front-four rotation.

WINSLOW TOWNSON FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	7	12	14	10	8
Starters	0	4	3	1	3
Backups	0	0	3	3	2
Other team	3	3	6	2	0
Out of NFL	4	5	2	4	3

BIGGEST STEAL: Zach Thomas, MLB (D5c-96). Thomas is a perfect fit for Miami because DTs Daryl Gardener and Tim Bowens work hard to leave him uncovered and free to make tackles. His production underscores the league's overemphasis on height, weight and speed.

BIGGEST REACH: Billy Milner, T (D1-95). Miami fell in love with Milner's ability to protect the passer in the University of Houston's run-and-shoot, but his skills in the running game never caught up.

BIGGEST BUST: Cecil Collins, RB (D5-99). The hype about his ability was overblown, but Collins was worthy of a first-round grade. Johnson's willingness to gamble on character-problem players blew up in his face last fall, however, when Collins was arrested and, later, suspended and then released by the team.

GRADE B

7 SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

For such a stranger to the playoffs, the Seahawks have done an excellent job of evaluating talent in the top half of the draft. However, the old (pre-Mike Holmgren) regime didn't do a particularly strong job after Round 4, which explains the team's overall lack of depth.

BEST PICK: Joey Galloway, WR (D1-95). The most explosive player in franchise history, Galloway can get deep on any cornerback in the league. He put people in the seats when the team offered little else on the field. Unfortunately, he signed with Dallas this offseason.

WORST PICK: Jason Kyle, LB (D4b-95). A big-time athlete at Arizona State, Kyle was a long snapper almost exclusively in Seattle before the Browns took him in the '99 expansion draft.

BEST CLASS: '97. Seattle has made the most of its first-round picks, as evidenced by the selections of CB Shawn Springs (No. 1a) and T Walter Jones (No. 1b), Pro Bowl players last season. It didn't select again until Rounds 5-7, but landed athletic TE Itula Mili (sixth).

WORST CLASS: '98. LB DeShone Myles (fourth round) has leapfrogged Anthony Simmons (first) for the starting spot in the middle, proving an error in judgment by the personnel department. RT Todd Weiner was pressed into duty last season and clearly wasn't ready. Holmgren's patience with fumble-prone RB Ahman Green (third round) is wearing thin.

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY					
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	6	9	5	7	7
Starters	2	3	2	1	0
Backups	0	1	1	3	6
Other team	0	0	0	1	0
Out of NFL	4	5	2	2	1

BEST VALUE: Phillip Daniels, DE (D4a-96). Daniels, who was considered too weak at the college level, is a case study in what leverage and technique can do for a player.

BIGGEST STEAL: DeShone Myles, LB (D4-98). A terrific search-and-flow type of linebacker, Myles has played well during his stints as a starter. He has great ball instincts, covers ground and beats blockers to the hole.

BIGGEST REACH: Robert Barr, T (D3a-96). A classic overweight underachiever, Barr couldn't get by simply with his size at the next level. Now he's out of football.

BIGGEST BUST: Christian Fauria, TE (D2-95). Holmgren's West Coast offense gave Fauria a chance to increase his role in the passing game, but his inability to separate from defenders reduces him, basically, to a blocking specialist.

8 ARIZONA CARDINALS

The Cardinals have done a tremendous job of stockpiling defensive talent with their higher picks, but it has been at the expense of their sagging offense. The team has failed to acquire quality depth in Rounds 3-5.

BEST PICK: Jake Plummer, QB (D2-97). Though he's far from being the "next Joe Montana," as people have predicted, Plummer has all the skills to be a big-time winner. If the front office can find a running game in the offseason, Plummer won't have the team's fate hanging on his right arm every week.

WORST PICK: Leeland McElroy, RB (D2-96). The team envisioned him as a Warrick Dunn-type player, but the former Texas A&M star didn't carry the ball after his rookie season. This pick is the reason Arizona still doesn't have a running game.

BEST CLASS: '98. DE Andre Wadsworth, CB Corey Chavous and S Pat Tillman could be mainstays on defense. RB Michael Pittman flashed potential late last season. Terry Hardy took the starting tight end job away from disappointing Johnny McWilliams.

WORST CLASS: '95. Arizona hit on WR Frank Sanders (Round 2), but trading its Nos. 1 and 4 picks to the Jets for Rob Moore was debatable. QB Stoney Case didn't develop and was a Ravens backup in '99. DT Chad Eaton, a solid pick, starts for the Patriots.

BEST VALUE: Pat Tillman, S (D7c-98). Tillman stepped in as a rookie and brought a needed physical presence to the secondary. He's excellent in run support and will be an ideal nickel player once he develops his coverage skills.

JASON WISE FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY					
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	9	9	8	10	10
Starters	1	3	4	5	2
Backups	0	1	0	2	7
Other team	3	1	1	0	0
Out of NFL	5	4	3	3	1

BIGGEST STEAL: Mark Smith, DT (D7-97). Smith is a powerful, inside run-stuffer and has shown some big-time ability as a pass rusher. His only problem is he can't avoid injuries.

BIGGEST REACH: Tom Knight, CB (D1-97). Scouts loved Knight's cover skills coming out of Iowa, but his low threshold for pain has kept Knight from entrenching himself as a starter.

BIGGEST BUST: McWilliams (D3-96). The team has never shown more patience with a player. The USC product is the typical big-school player who got by on great ability in college but struggled at the next level.

9 DETROIT LIONS

Despite their inconsistent play, the Lions have done a solid job in the draft year in and year out. They rarely miss in the first two rounds and have done a good job of identifying underrated talent in the middle rounds.

BEST PICK: Charlie Batch, QB (D2b-98). The Lions have lacked a true field general since Greg Landry (1968-78), but Batch has shown signs that he's the real deal. If he stays healthy, he will be a good one for a long time.

WORST PICK: Brad Ford, CB (D4-96). This pick never made any sense. Ford was undersized and unproductive at Alabama, and most every other team had him slotted in the sixth or seventh round on their draft boards.

BEST CLASS: '95. DT Luther Elliss and MLB Stephen Boyd assure the Lions of being strong up the middle for many more years, and TE David Sloan is a rare athletic talent when he stays healthy. All three players were selected to the Pro Bowl last season. Starting FB Cory Schlesinger was a steal in the sixth round.

WORST CLASS: '96. Outside LB Reggie Brown and G Jeff Hartings both started as rookies—an injury forced Brown to retire after the '97 season—but the front office would like to forget the rest of the crop.

BEST VALUE: Boyd (D5a-95). Boyd, who cherished the opportunity to play behind Chris Spielman, his hero, for one season, has continued the team's long tradition of strong play at middle linebacker. He is an instinctive, flow-type linebacker with a nose for the ball.

ROSS DETTMAN FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY					
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	8	5	10	5	7
Starters	4	1	1	3	1
Backups	0	1	6	1	6
Other team	1	1	0	1	0
Out of NFL	3	2	3	0	0

BIGGEST STEAL: Germane Crowell, WR (D2a-98). Other teams are now kicking themselves for passing on Crowell, who compares favorably to teammate and fellow Virginia grad Herman Moore but has more speed. He has a chance to be special if his concentration improves.

BIGGEST REACH: Terry Fair, CB (D1-98). Taking a Smurf-type corner with the 20th overall pick didn't make any sense, especially in a division dominated by big receivers. Fair is an exciting return man but only an average cornerback.

BIGGEST BUST: Juan Roque, OT (D2a-97). Roque is a mammoth guy with limited athletic ability. He will be nothing more than a No. 3 or 4 tackle in the NFL.

10 DENVER BRONCOS

Mike Shanahan has earned great recognition for his coaching ability. But as VP of football operations, he also has done a good job of absorbing free-agent losses that have crippled other successful teams and replenishing talent.

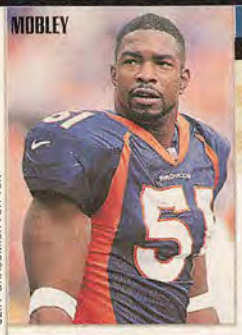
BEST PICK: Trevor Pryce, DT (D1-97). Pryce has never doubted his abilities, and, now, neither does anyone in the league. Some teammates claim the 300-pound Pryce, who was voted a Pro Bowl starter last season, could play linebacker if he set his mind to it.

WORST PICK: Tory James, CB (D2-96). James, now a free agent, had been a solid special teams contributor, but was relegated to nickel play behind starting cornerbacks Ray Crockett and Dale Carter.

BEST CLASS: '96. LB John Mobley and special teams wrecking ball Detron Smith have been Pro Bowl selections. CBs James and Darrius Johnson provide secondary depth. QB Jeff Lewis was traded to Carolina for a couple of draft picks. WR Patrick Jeffers, who emerged in Carolina last season, is the best player who got away.

WORST CLASS: '97. A lack of selections (the team had only three picks) is the basis for the label. Pryce and G Dan Neil are among the best at their positions, but S Cory Gilliard is nothing more than a footnote in the team's media guide.

BEST VALUE: Byron Chamberlain, TE (D7b-95), and Olandis Gary, RB (D4-99). Chamberlain most likely will succeed Shannon Sharpe as the starter next season; his only drawback is consistency. Gary's unexpected emergence cushioned the loss of Terrell Davis to injury in '99.



CLIFF GRASSMICK FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	7	12	3	7	12
Starters	1	1	1	1	1
Backups	2	4	1	2	7
Other team	0	5	0	2	1
Out of NFL	4	2	1	2	3

BIGGEST STEAL: Terrell Davis, RB (D6b-95). Davis looks like he'll go down as one of the best backs ever to play in the NFL. It will be interesting to see how he bounces back from his knee injury without John Elway at quarterback.

BIGGEST REACH: Montae Reagor, DE (D2a-99). Reagor, an undersized pass rusher, probably could have been taken in later rounds.

BIGGEST BUST: Marcus Nash, WR (D1-98). Nash wasn't ready to play as a rookie and he never fulfilled the No. 3 role that would have allowed the Broncos to implement more three-receiver sets. He's now trying to hang on with the Ravens.

11 TENNESSEE TITANS

In the last five years, the Titans have drafted the three key elements of a championship-caliber team: a franchise quarterback (Steve McNair), an elite running back (Eddie George) and a fierce pass rusher (Jevon Kearse).

BEST PICK: Eddie George, RB (D1b-96). One of the NFL's most dominant all-purpose backs, George assumed a huge leadership role in '99 and was the biggest reason the team reached the Super Bowl.

WORST PICK: Kevin Dyson, WR (D1-98). Instead of rolling the dice on controversial WR Randy Moss, the Titans took Dyson with the 16th pick. Although he still has a chance to become a solid receiver, Dyson will never make the impact Moss would have made.

BEST CLASS: '96. George was the centerpiece, but several late-round hits make this draft the team's best. With their second pick in the fourth round, the Titans smartly tabbed mammoth T Jon Runyan, now with the Eagles. LB Terry Killens, T Jason Layman and S Anthony Dorsett provided great depth at their positions last season.

WORST CLASS: '97. Aside from starting DE Kenny Holmes, this draft resulted in basically an empty cupboard. CB Denard Walker starts, but he should be nothing more than a nickel player. WR Joey Kent, T Scott Sanderson, DT Pratt Lyons and CB George McCullough all should have contributed last season.

BEST VALUE: Gary Walker, DT (D5b-95). Walker has worked diligently to develop his skills, and few offensive linemen can handle his quickness. A free agent in '99, he emerged as a top player for Jacksonville.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	9	9	9	8	7
Starters	1	2	2	4	1
Backups	3	4	5	2	5
Other team	2	1	0	0	1
Out of NFL	3	2	2	2	0

BIGGEST STEAL: Jevon Kearse, DE (D1-99). Some questionable interviews at the scouting combine left many teams leery of taking Kearse. But if he continues to develop at his current rate, he could reach Reggie White's all-time sack record.

BIGGEST REACH: Bryant Mix, DT (D2a-96). A poorly conditioned underachiever whose poor work ethic was exposed.

BIGGEST BUST: Joey Kent, WR (D2-97). The University of Tennessee's long lineage of productive receivers (Carl Pickens, Willie Gault, et al) hiccupped with this pick. Kent's college numbers proved to be more system-driven than an actual gauge of his skills.

12 INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Since coming over from Carolina, G.M. Bill Polian and his staff have loaded up the offense with top skill players and added some much-needed athleticism to the defense. The Colts' strong evaluation of the draft will keep them atop the AFC for the long haul.

BEST PICK: (tie) Peyton Manning, QB (D1-98) and Edgerrin James, RB (D1-99). How much different would this team be with Ryan Leaf under center and Ricky Williams in the backfield? The Colts certainly would not have gone 13-3 last season.

WORST PICK: '96 trade of second first-round pick to Bucs for Craig Erickson. The team thought it was getting a franchise-type quarterback but, instead, received an overrated player with a shot right arm.

BEST CLASS: '98. Not only did the club land Manning, it also supplied him with E.G. Green and Jerome Pathon, a pair of receiving threats on the perimeter, and G Steve McKinney, a solid anchor on the offensive line.

WORST CLASS: '95. DT Ellis Johnson and TE Ken Dilger were quality picks, but RB Zack Crockett never produced like the Colts had hoped. An organization is never satisfied when only two picks stick on the roster.

BEST VALUE: Adam Meadows, OT (D2-97). Meadows, who moved from left tackle to right tackle in his second season, is a smart player who compensates for marginal feet by taking good angles with his blocks. He will be around a long time.

JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	7	8	8	7	7
Starters	1	1	2	3	3
Backups	1	0	1	1	2
Other team	1	3	1	1	1
Out of NFL	4	4	4	2	1

BIGGEST STEAL: Steve McKinney, G (D4-98). The Colts disappointed a lot of teams when they pulled McKinney's name off the draft board. He started all 16 games as a rookie and could wind up as a Pro Bowl-caliber player.

BIGGEST REACH: Scott Slutzker, TE (D3-96). This selection didn't really fit a team need. Slutzker battled injuries, found himself on the bench behind Ken Dilger and Marcus Pollard, and now is a free agent.

BIGGEST BUST: Dedric Mathis, DB (D2-96). He had great athleticism and man-coverage skills coming out of college, but his lack of competitiveness landed him on the street.

13 ST. LOUIS RAMS

The Rams have built a winner more through free agency than the draft. The biggest key to their success has been the ability to land star players at impact positions, such as left tackle (Orlando Pace), running back (Marshall Faulk, in a trade) and rush end (Kevin Carter).

BEST PICK: Carter (D1-95). Despite mind-boggling predraft workouts by Mike Mamula, the Rams stuck to their value board and picked Carter (sixth overall), who has emerged as one of the league's fiercest pass-rushing ends.

WORST PICK: Lawrence Phillips, RB (D1-96). This has to be the worst miscalculation by a team in the past five years. Every NFL team had tons of dirt on this guy, but the Rams gambled anyway.

BEST CLASS: '97. Orlando Pace has become the dominant tackle the team foresaw when it worked him out at Ohio State. CB Dexter McCleon makes enough plays to keep him in the lineup. Ryan Tucker is a versatile offensive lineman who may develop into a top-notch starter. DB Taje Allen is a solid special teams player who contributes.

WORST CLASS: '96. Phillips: bust. WR Eddie Kennison: no heart. QB Tony Banks: overrated. The production of the team's top three picks has been surpassed by that of TE Ernie Conwell, OT Fred Miller (now with the Titans) and DT Chuck Osborne (with Raiders).

BEST VALUE: Joe Germaine, QB (D4-99). Germaine is a heady leader who performs well under pressure and could lead this team once Kurt Warner steps aside.

CARTER

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	10	10	6	8	7
Starters	1	1	2	3	2
Backups	0	1	0	2	4
Other team	3	4	2	0	0
Out of NFL	6	4	2	3	1

BIGGEST STEAL: Az-Zahir Hakim, WR (D4a-98). Hakim established himself last season as a legitimate big-play receiver on underneath crossing routes, and his ability on punt returns makes him a rare dual threat.

BIGGEST REACH: Robert Holcombe, RB (D2-98). A very productive player in college, Holcombe doesn't have the speed to make it as a halfback in the NFL. Last season, the team moved him to fullback, where he was a competent starter.

BIGGEST BUST: Kennison (D1b-96). After an impressive rookie season, this burner flamed out. Kennison (now in Chicago) has never been physical enough to beat tight press coverage.

GRADE C+

14 BALTIMORE RAVENS

Though they have made sound choices in the first two rounds, the Ravens have missed badly in the latter stages of the draft. They have failed to add a quality foundation on offense, which leaves them too reliant on a strong defense.

BEST PICK: Ray Lewis, LB (D1b-96). A perennial Pro Bowl tackling machine, Lewis, whose future is uncertain because of pending murder charges, is the prototypical search-and-flow type of linebacker, who compensates for the deficiencies of Baltimore's outside linebackers against the run. The only knock is that Lewis doesn't have the size (6-1, 240) to match up well if he doesn't beat the blocker to the hole.

WORST PICK: DeRon Jenkins, CB (D2b-96). You really can't call this a bad pick, but the club's short history and strong record on Day 1 require a reach. Jenkins doesn't make many plays on the ball, but he held off competition from Chris McAlister last year to retain his starting job before signing with San Diego as a free agent.

BEST CLASS: '96. Lewis and OT Jonathan Ogden are among the best in the league at their positions. WR Jermaine Lewis is the one Ravens skill player who scares defensive coordinators.

WORST CLASS: '98. CB Duane Starks had a strong second season in '99 (five interceptions) and WR Patrick Johnson showed signs of developing late in the season, but the final five picks brought nothing.

BEST VALUE: Jermaine Lewis, WR (D5-96). Although he doesn't fit the role of a starting wideout, Lewis could be the best slot receiver in the league if the Ravens surrounded him with more talent.

J. LEWIS

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	6	7	12	7	4
Starters	0	3	4	1	2
Backups	0	1	2	3	1
Other team	2	0	1	0	0
Out of NFL	4	3	5	3	1

BIGGEST STEAL: Jeff Mitchell, C (D5-97). Mitchell has emerged as a solid starter. He always will have physical limitations, but he is versatile and has great intangibles.

BIGGEST REACH: Pat Johnson (D2-98). If he had shown anything as a rookie, the team wouldn't have had to chase so many free-agent wideouts last offseason. This is a classic case of a guy who can't use his speed to set up defenders.

BIGGEST BUST: Trading a third-round pick in '99 and a conditional pick in 2000 for Detroit QB Scott Mitchell was Brian Billick's worst move in his first year as coach. It should have been clear that Mitchell is not a leader. By Week 3, Mitchell was carrying a clipboard.

GRADE C+

15 PITTSBURGH STEELERS

As last season's free fall indicates, the past five drafts have not been kind to the Steelers. Their failure to surround RB Jerome Bettis with quality skill players has closed the window of opportunity for another Super Bowl trip.

BEST PICK: Trading two selections (D2-96, D4-97) to St. Louis in 1996 for Bettis. Pittsburgh's power running philosophy was solidified once "The Bus" came to town. This was simply great foresight by the front office.

WORST PICK: Jamain Stephens, OT (D1-96). Scouts love big guys who can anchor an offensive line, and at 6-6, 330 pounds, Stephens seemed like a perfect fit. But the Steelers didn't consider his marginal feet and stiffness in pass protection. He's now with the Bengals.

BEST CLASS: '95. The first six selections eventually became starters. Mark Bruener is one of the game's best blocking tight ends; Kordell Stewart has had his moments at both quarterback and receiver; and G Brenden Stai is strong when healthy. DT Oliver Gibson (Bengals) and LB Donta Jones (Panthers) are solid pros, and SS Lee Flowers was a nice late-round selection.

WORST CLASS: '97. The Steelers drafted for need but struck out on talent. CB Chad Scott never had great speed and now is a step slower after a serious knee injury. Will Blackwell has done nothing to improve the team's situation at wide receiver. OT Paul Wiggins was a big, athletic lineman who tested positive for steroids in '98.

BEST VALUE: Earl Holmes, LB (D4a-96). Teammate Levon Kirkland gets all the accolades, but Holmes is equally competent inside. He is, perhaps, the most underrated linebacker in the league.

HOLMES

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	10	9	8	10	11
Starters	2	4	2	3	2
Backups	2	0	2	4	8
Other team	2	3	0	1	1
Out of NFL	4	2	4	2	0

BIGGEST STEAL: Flowers (D5a-95). The luxury of sitting behind veteran talent for a couple of years helped Flowers, who is one of the most physical, run-stopping safeties in the league.

BIGGEST REACH: Jeremy Staat, DE (D2-98). He made believers out of the Steelers with some strong predraft workouts, but his production hasn't matched his potential.

BIGGEST BUST: Wiggins (D3a-97). A couple of other teams have taken a chance on Wiggins since his steroids suspension, but his career appears over.

GRADE C+

16 DALLAS COWBOYS

They have put a premium on speed over the years, and that's exactly what they've gotten. In their never-ending search for pure athletes, the Cowboys often ignore guys who are simply good football players.

BEST PICK: Randall Godfrey, LB (D2b-96). The Cowboys drafted him to play on the outside, but the coaching staff smartly moved him to the middle. Godfrey, who jumped to Tennessee in free agency takes on lead blockers and can neutralize any fullback in the league.

WORST PICK: Sherman Williams, RB (D2a-95). He was expected to be Emmitt Smith's heir apparent, but a combination of Williams' poor work ethic and Smith's longevity ultimately ended his career. A No. 2 pick must show more than an occasional flash of running skills.

BEST CLASS: '98. DE Greg Ellis, the top pick, made some huge plays before getting injured last season. Mammoth Flozell Adams is a versatile offensive lineman. S Izell Reese had three interceptions in only eight games last season.

WORST CLASS: '95. Williams and TE Kendall Watkins were second-round disasters, and C Shane Hannah had a "cup of coffee" after being taken in Round 3. TE Eric Bjornson doesn't hold up well enough in the running game to be an every-down player.

BEST VALUE: Dexter Coakley, LB (D3a-97). An excellent small-school find from Appalachian State, Coakley overcomes his lack of size because he is the fastest player in the league at his position. Quarterbacks fear throwing in his direction.

ELLIS
JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	10	9	9	9	8
Starters	0	2	2	4	1
Backups	2	1	0	2	4
Other team	0	2	1	1	1
Out of NFL	8	4	6	2	2

BIGGEST STEAL: Omar Stoutmire, S (D7-97). Dallas waived Stoutmire last season, but the Jets quickly picked him up. Although he doesn't have the speed to hold up in deep-zone coverage, he plays the run well and contributes on special teams.

BIGGEST REACH: Kavika Pittman, DE (D2a-96). Scouts loved his speed off the edge but overestimated his ability to raise his game to the next level. Dallas never envisioned him totaling 10 sacks in four years. Pittman joind the Broncos as a free agent.

BIGGEST BUST: Watkins (D2b-95). If Watkins had panned out, the team wouldn't have had to spend a first-round pick two years later on David LaFleur.

GRADE C+

17 WASHINGTON REDSKINS

G.M. Charley Casserly was unjustifiably let go prior to last season after masterminding one of the most ingenious draft-day trades in league history. Although they had been mediocre the previous four years, the Redskins have their draft board loaded for a big haul this April.

BEST PICK: Trading their No. 1 pick in '99 (fifth overall) to New Orleans for all of the Saints' selections in '99 and their first and third picks in 2000. The Redskins moved down only two slots and still came away with CB Champ Bailey.

WORST PICK: Trading their No. 1 pick in '98 to Cincinnati for DT Dan Wilkinson, who has freakish lower-body strength and can dominate in spurts but takes too many plays off.

BEST CLASS: '97. All eight players still are on rosters, including six with the Redskins. DE Kenard Lang, LB Derek Smith, LB Greg Jones, WR Albert Connell and G Brad Badger are starters or players who have started. LB Twan Russell contributes on special teams.

WORST CLASS: '98. Instead of taking a potentially dominant player in the first round, the team got conservative and made a safe trade with Cincinnati for Wilkinson. If TE Stephen Alexander and LB Shawn Barber emerge next season, this class' standing will improve.

BEST VALUE: Stephen Davis, RB (D4-96). Many teams looked at Davis as a 'tweener coming out of college, but he made the most of his starting chance last season. He's a tough inside runner with enough speed to bust a big run.

DAVIS
BOB LEVERONE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	8	6	8	7	6
Starters	2	1	3	1	2
Backups	1	1	3	3	1
Other team	3	0	2	0	0
Out of NFL	2	4	0	3	3

BIGGEST STEAL: Connell (D4-97). Connell has found his niche as a complementary big-play threat opposite Michael Westbrook. More of a natural playmaker than technician, Connell needs to avoid injury problems.

BIGGEST REACH: Greg Jones, LB (D2-97). The knock on Jones coming out of college was that he didn't have the size to hold up against the run. He has yet to bulk up, and his speed and change of direction will take him only so far.

BIGGEST BUST: Andre Johnson, T (D1-96). This grossly overrated lineman was taken in Round 1 because of his massive size and potential to dominate in the running game. But he had terrible feet and played too high.

GRADE C+

18 BUFFALO BILLS

The Bills have made the playoffs four of the past five years, so they haven't had favorable draft slots. But G.M. John Butler and director of player personnel Dwight Adams have found small-school gems in the mid and late rounds.

BEST PICK: Eric Moulds, WR (D1-96). It took awhile for him to adjust to press coverage, but once he did, Moulds began to dominate vertically. He has that rare extra gear that all teams covet. He plays with great confidence and goes aggressively after every ball.

WORST PICK: Trading first- and fourth-round choices in '98 to Jacksonville for QB Rob Johnson. Although the Bills didn't know what they had in Doug Flutie, those two picks could have been used to upgrade personnel in other areas.

BEST CLASS: '96. In addition to Moulds, the Bills picked up future starters in LB Gabe Northern, OL Dusty Ziegler and TE Jay Riemersma. DT Sean Moran and LB Dan Brandenburg are productive role players. CB Matt Stevens (Washington) and DB Raymond Jackson (Cleveland) stuck elsewhere.

WORST CLASS: '97. First-rounder Antowain Smith hasn't developed into the workhorse back the team hoped he would be. Reaching for Columbia DE Marcellus Wiley was not a smart move. Neither Jamie Nails nor Marcus Spriggs has emerged as a reliable offensive lineman.

BEST VALUE: John Holecek, LB (D5-95). Holecek has become a solid player. He isn't real athletic, but his intensity and feel in coverage make him indispensable.

HOLECEK
FRED VUICH FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	11	10	6	6	9
Starters	2	3	2	1	2
Backups	1	2	2	4	5
Other team	5	3	0	0	0
Out of NFL	3	2	2	1	2

BIGGEST STEAL: Riemersma (D7b-96). A big target with soft hands, Riemersma works extremely well against zone defenses and has a knack for getting open inside the 20.

BIGGEST REACH: Smith (D1-97). Buffalo should have known better than to spend the 23rd overall pick on a player who isn't an every-down running back. Smith needs a lot of attention, his locker-room presence is questionable and he appears to be wearing down after only three years.

BIGGEST BUST: Todd Collins, QB (D2-95). His propensity to make poor reads and force the ball into coverage ultimately landed Collins in Kansas City, where he was the emergency quarterback last season.

GRADE C

19 CHICAGO BEARS

The Bears had arguably the worst four-year draft run (1995-98) in the league before personnel director Mark Hatley turned things around in '99. A commitment to acquire better athletes will keep them headed in the right direction.

BEST PICK: Olin Kreutz, C (D3-98). This blue-collar grinder was ready to play as a rookie and really came on strong last season. Kreutz has worked hard to develop his pass-protection skills and become a solid, all-around lineman.

WORST PICK: John Allred, TE (D2-97). Teams generally don't like to take a tight end this high unless they're sure he can dominate. Allred hasn't even come close. The Bears simply wasted this pick.

BEST CLASS: '99. QB Cade McNown showed flashes of becoming a franchise player, and WRs Marty Booker and D'Wayne Bates should help for years to come. On defense, LBs Warrick Holdman and Khari Samuel, DE Rosevelt Colvin and DB Jerry Azumah will make bigger impacts next season.

WORST CLASS: '97. Allred ... Bob Sapp ... Van Hiles ... Shawn Swayda. Who are those guys? They should be a significant part of the nucleus of this team. Former Northwestern RB Darnell Autry, now with the Eagles, skipped the '99 season to pursue an acting career.

BEST VALUE: Marcus Robinson, WR (D4b-97). The team was patient with the former NFL Europe offensive MVP and it paid off in '99, when he erupted for 84 catches and 1,400 yards.

ROSS DETTMAN FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY					
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	9	7	10	8	12
Starters	1	3	1	4	3
Backups	2	2	1	3	7
Other team	1	1	1	1	0
Out of NFL	5	1	7	0	2

BIGGEST STEAL: Azumah (D5-99). Credit the Bears for seeing something in the former New Hampshire running back, who made a surprisingly smooth transition to cornerback.

BIGGEST REACH: Curtis Enis, RB (D1-98). The Bears had far too many other needs at the time to go for a running back. With Raymont Harris and Edgar Bennett on the roster, they would have been wise to address their defense. Regardless of a costly rookie knee injury, Enis wasn't worthy of the fifth overall pick.

BIGGEST BUST: Rashaan Salaam, RB (D1-95). After a 1,074-yard rookie year, Salaam went into a fumble-filled tailspin. He was out of football in 1998 and bounced from tryout to tryout in '99.

20 KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

The Chiefs have done a nice job in some areas (i.e. secondary, tight end), but their failure to find an every-down running back has created instability on offense. G.M. Carl Peterson and his staff must do a better job of locating talent at the skill positions.

BEST PICK: Tony Gonzalez, TE (D1-97). The Chiefs traded up to get him and the gamble has paid off. The team's ball-control offense revolves around Gonzalez's ability to get open underneath and stretch the field on alley routes.

WORST PICK: Rashaan Shehee, RB (D3-98). Shehee isn't durable enough to be an every-down player, and his struggles forced the team to use a second-round pick on Mike Cloud last year.

BEST CLASS: '96. This group provided the backbone of the defense last season. The selection of Ss Jerome Woods and Reggie Tongue (now with Seattle) were followed with choices that landed backup DE John Browning and OLB Donnie Edwards. Special teams standout and WR Joe Horn (now with Saints) was a quality fifth-round pick.

WORST CLASS: '95. Starting with OT Trezelle Jenkins, the club squandered several selections. Getting kick returner Tamarick Vanover (third round) and DT Tom Barndt (sixth) saved an embarrassing day for the organization.

BEST VALUE: Donnie Edwards, LB (D4-96). The acquisition of MLB Marvcus Patton before last season allowed Edwards to move outside, where he became a top playmaker.

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY					
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	8	9	6	7	6
Starters	1	3	1	1	1
Backups	2	3	1	3	4
Other team	0	3	3	2	0
Out of NFL	5	0	1	1	1

BIGGEST STEAL: Tom Barndt, DT (D6b-95). Though he rarely dominates, Barndt is a classic overachiever who has defied the odds to not only stay in the league but also lock down a starting job.

BIGGEST REACH: Mike Cloud, RB (D2-99). An impressive Senior Bowl performance raised Cloud's draft stock higher than it should have been. He has a nice burst to the hole, but his lack of size will render him a career third-down back.

BIGGEST BUST: Jenkins (D1-95). Scouts were enamored with his size, but Jenkins never showed the fire to compete and his production always was questionable. Missing on Jenkins forced the team to spend both its '98 and '99 first-round picks on offensive tackles.

21 PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Aside from last year's selection of Donovan McNabb, no team has done worse in the first round. It's difficult to comprehend how a team can foul up the easiest part of the evaluation process.

BEST PICK: Brian Dawkins, FS (D2b-96). One of the league's best "center fielders," Dawkins always seems to be in the right position. He would make even more plays if the Eagles surrounded him with enough talent for him to gamble more often.

WORST PICK: Mike Mamula, DE (D1-95). Mamula tested off the charts at the Indianapolis scouting combine, and Philadelphia envisioned him as Reggie White's replacement. But injuries and a lack of bulk have reduced his role to strictly a nickel edge rusher.

BEST CLASS: '99. Any time a team can get a quarterback with the skills and pedigree of a McNabb it has to be considered a great draft. LG Doug Brzezinski should be a solid starter for the next decade. WR Na Brown, FB Cecil Martin and TE Jed Weaver all proved they could play as rookies.

WORST CLASS: '96. Jermane Mayberry has yet to settle in at one position on the offensive line, TE Jason Dunn never worked hard enough to tap his potential and QB Bobby Hoying became gun-shy behind a pathetic front. The only real players to emerge were Dawkins and DE Steve White, who starts for the Bucs.

BEST VALUE: Damien Robinson, FS (D4-97). Though he probably never would have been given a true shot with Dawkins already on board, Robinson never should have been cut. He now forms a punishing safety duo with John Lynch in Tampa Bay.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY					
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	9	9	11	8	10
Starters	3	1	2	2	4
Backups	0	1	2	3	6
Other team	1	3	3	1	0
Out of NFL	5	4	4	2	0

BIGGEST STEAL: Duce Staley, RB (D3-97). An Emmitt Smith-type power runner, Staley has shouldered the offensive load the past couple of seasons. He'll be even more effective once the passing game develops under coach Andy Reid.

BIGGEST REACH: Jon Harris, DE (D1-97). A tall, gangly player who was labeled a "project" by most teams, Harris never added the girth needed to stop the run.

BIGGEST BUST: Dunn (D2a-96). Dunn was not mentally tough enough to deal with adversity. No team picked him up after the Eagles cut him last August.

22 SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

For many years, because the team felt it had enough pieces in place, it concentrated on adding proven veteran free agents rather than rookies. That logic has caught up with the 49ers, who are left without a true successor to Steve Young and virtually no speed on defense.

BEST PICK: Terrell Owens, WR (D3-96). With Jerry Rice showing signs of age, the team took a chance on another small-school player, and the gamble paid off. Though he doesn't have Rice's reliable hands, Owens has the size and deceptive speed to be a go-to receiver for the next five or six years.

WORST PICK: Jim Druckenmiller, QB (D1-97). This big-armed, immobile pocket passer never fit the team's West Coast timing offense and was traded to Miami last year. Druckenmiller's off-field problems should have been enough to scare off the 49ers.

BEST CLASS: '98. CB R.W. McQuarters was too small and slow to warrant a first-round grade, but that pick was offset by the savvy selections of FS Lance Schulters and FB Fred Beasley. The team also landed three offensive linemen with bright futures: Jeremy Newberry, Phil Ostrowski and Chris Ruhman.

WORST CLASS: '96. WRs Owens and Iheanyi Uwaezuoke were the only two players on NFL rosters in '99. DE Israel Ifeanyi was a bust, and twins Sean and Sam Manuel were a feel-good story that never developed.

OWENS

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	4	7	3	7	8
Starters	0	1	2	2	0
Backups	1	0	1	3	6
Other team	2	2	0	2	1
Out of NFL	1	4	0	0	1

BEST VALUE: Beasley (D6-98). At 220 pounds, Beasley was considered too light to be an effective lead blocker, but he helped pave the way for Charlie Garner's 1,229-yard season in '99.

BIGGEST STEAL: Tai Streets, WR (D6-99). Because of Streets' torn Achilles' tendon, the team was able to get the probable second-round pick in the sixth. Streets will take over for Rice when he leaves.

BIGGEST REACH: Pierson Prioleau, CB (D4b-99). The team tried to move Prioleau, a former outside linebacker and safety, to corner but his coverage skills were too raw. Prioleau still has a chance if he's moved back to safety.

BIGGEST BUST: Ifeanyi (D2a-96). He quickly found out that you can't simply run past NFL tackles. He never developed enough rush moves.

GRADE C-

23 NEW YORK JETS

They've been handcuffed in recent years because of high picks sent to the Patriots as compensation for Bill Parcells and Curtis Martin. The team's resurgence under Parcells had more to do with smart free-agency moves than a strong draft record.

BEST PICK: Keyshawn Johnson, WR (D1-96). Johnson's effortless running style and crisp routes overshadow the competitiveness that makes him one of the game's best receivers.

WORST PICK: Kyle Brady, TE (D1-95). Brady wasn't a complete-enough player to justify being a top 10 pick. He essentially was a third tackle for the Jets, his main contributions coming as a blocker.

BEST CLASS: '97. From a depth standpoint, this was the team's most productive draft. James Farrior emerged in '99 as the kind of athletic cover linebacker that injuries prevented him from becoming his first two seasons. DTs Rick Terry and Jason Ferguson have started on a marginal defensive line, but they are, at least, reliable backups. WR Dedric Ward and RB Leon Johnson are dual threats on offense and in the return game.

WORST CLASS: '99. The Jets focused on their aging and under-achieving offensive line and came away with Gs Randy Thomas and David Loverne, who could become players. Sending their first-round pick to New England in the Parcells settlement crippled this class.

BEST VALUE: Chris Hayes, S (D7-96). His weak coverage skills have prevented Hayes from contributing on defense, but he's the perfect example of a guy who has carved a career for himself on special teams.

MICKENS

JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	8	6	11	12	9
Starters	0	2	2	1	2
Backups	0	2	1	6	6
Other team	5	1	1	2	1
Out of NFL	3	1	7	3	0

BIGGEST STEAL: Ray Mickens, CB (D3-96). His 5-8 size puts him at a disadvantage on the outside, but he has the quickness to stay with most receivers underneath. He is the best slot cover man in the AFC.

BIGGEST REACH: Scott Frost, S (D3a-98). He is a tough, disciplined player who loves the game, but Parcells should have shown better discretion. Frost was a quarterback at Nebraska who never played a snap on defense, though he had played safety at Stanford.

BIGGEST BUST: Alex Van Dyke, WR (D2-96). The team hoped he would step in opposite Johnson and start for many years. Instead, he was traded and has bounced around the NFL the last two years.

GRADE C-

24 OAKLAND RAIDERS

The Raiders always seem like they're just a player or two away from contending for the AFC title, but a fairly respectable draft record hasn't helped them avoid mediocrity. Owner Al Davis' fondness for big-school players has been a staple for decades.

BEST PICK: Jon Ritchie, FB (D3-98). Oakland's offense revolves around the play of its fullback, and Ritchie is the versatile tough guy who fits the mold. Though he'll never be a running threat, Ritchie can catch the ball and his run-blocking is coming along.

WORST PICK: Matt Stinchcomb, OT (D1-99). Stinchcomb was a sound technician coming out of college, but his lack of strength should have been a bigger concern for the team.

BEST CLASS: '98. Top pick Charles Woodson has established himself as one of the league's top cornerbacks and fellow first-rounder Mo Collins has improved in each of his first two seasons at left tackle. Ritchie, G Gennaro DiNapoli and backup TE Jeremy Brigham have helped upgrade the running game. Reserve LB Travian Smith has been outstanding on special teams.

WORST CLASS: '97. No. 1 pick Darrell Russell is one of the most dominant defensive tackles in the league and DT Grady Jackson, the final selection, provides versatile depth. The four players picked in between are not worth noting.

RITCHIE

DILIP VISHWANAT / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	7	7	6	9	7
Starters	1	2	1	4	1
Backups	1	0	4	2	3
Other team	1	1	0	0	2
Out of NFL	4	4	1	3	1

BEST VALUE: La' Roi Glover, DT (D5-96). If Oakland still had Glover to team inside with Darrell Russell, AFC West QBs would never have a pocket to throw from. Waived in '97, Glover has developed into a disruptive force for the Saints.

BIGGEST STEAL: Jackson (D6b-97). Though he doesn't start, Jackson can play anywhere in the defensive line and has the potential to become one of the league's premier run-stuffers.

BIGGEST REACH: Chad Levitt, FB (D4-97). He impressed scouts with his size/speed combination, but the team never was comfortable with his run-blocking skills

BIGGEST BUST: Tim Kohn, G (D3b-97). Kohn gets this tag because he was the team's highest pick who hasn't produced over the past five years. He was quickly released and dropped later by the Broncos as well.

GRADE C-

25 CINCINNATI BENGALS

The Bengals have ignored conventional draft philosophy over the years and gambled on players of questionable character. Some of the risks paid off and others haven't. The club needs to do a better job of analyzing how the pieces fit together rather than just going for the best athlete.

BEST PICK: Willie Anderson, OT (D1-96). The big tackle came into his own last season. He played with more intensity than he had in his first three years and should get Pro Bowl recognition next season.

WORST PICK: Reinard Wilson, LB (D1-97). The team needed an impact player with this pick and Wilson has definitely not reached that level. He simply isn't big enough to be a premier pass rusher or fast enough to chase down plays from behind.

BEST CLASS: '98. The Bengals nabbed four defensive starters, including inside LBs Takeo Spikes and Brian Simmons. Before suffering a season-ending knee injury last year, CB Artrell Hawkins showed signs he could be a big-time player with a little more experience. OLB Steve Foley was a nice sleeper pick.

WORST CLASS: '95. The only player who has ever done anything is S Sam Shade, and the team let him go to the Redskins in free agency. RB Ki-Jana Carter could go down as one of the all-time busts.

BEST VALUE: Corey Dillon, RB (D2-97). A Pro Bowl player, Dillon runs hard every game and takes a pounding because opponents don't respect the Bengals' passing game. This guy will explode if QB Akili Smith develops into a true player.

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	6	7	7	9	9
Starters	0	2	1	3	2
Backups	1	3	4	2	4
Other team	2	1	0	2	0
Out of NFL	3	1	2	2	3

BIGGEST STEAL: Tremain Mack, S (D4-97). On pure athletic ability, Mack was a steal. He has excellent speed and range, but his biggest contributions have come as a kick returner. Off-field problems have stunted his growth as a player.

BIGGEST REACH: Marco Battaglia, TE (D2-96). He was drafted to push Tony McGee, but he never has. Battaglia wowed scouts with his predraft workouts, but his production hasn't matched his potential.

BIGGEST BUST: Carter (D1-95). Many people in the organization feel Carter's record-setting signing bonus zapped his desire. A crushing knee injury as a rookie set him back terribly, and now he is in a fight for a backup role.

26 NEW YORK GIANTS

The Giants' lack of feel for other teams' draft boards has cost them in terms of value early on. They have been guilty of pulling the trigger on overrated talent, especially in the first three rounds.

BEST PICK: Roman Oben, OT (D3-96). Teams put a premium on solid play by the left tackle, and the Giants got themselves a good one in Oben. He still tends to wear down late in the season, but his great feet are a tremendous asset in pass protection.

WORST PICK: Joe Jurevicius, WR (D2-98). Jurevicius is not bad, but his chances of becoming an impact player are slim. He has some top skills, but his future looks to be as a possession receiver.

BEST CLASS: '97. WR Ike Hilliard and third-down RB Tiki Barber made strides in '99, and S Sam Garnes brings a physical presence to the secondary. LBs Ryan Phillips and Pete Monty will be given chances to start next season. Although he was a reach in the third round, P Brad Maynard has been adequate.

WORST CLASS: '98. First-rounder Shaun Williams is neither a true free or strong safety and has yet to expand his nickel role. WRs Jurevicius (No. 2) and Brian Alford (No. 3) teased the front office with their athleticism. T Toby Myles (No. 5) is a long-range project who probably will wind up as a waste of time.

BEST VALUE: Conrad Hamilton, CB (D7-96). A rare small-school find for the Giants, Hamilton has made the most of his opportunities, stepping in when Jason Sehorn went down with injuries each of the last two years. He is an above-average matchup player, but needs to improve in zone coverage.

JOHN DUNN FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	9	7	8	6	9
Starters	1	4	5	0	2
Backups	1	1	2	4	7
Other team	2	2	1	1	0
Out of NFL	5	0	0	1	0

BIGGEST STEAL: Garnes, SS (D5-97). Although Garnes comes out in nickel situations, his toughness has been a huge asset to the defense. If his cover skills develop, Garnes could be a 10-year starter.

BIGGEST REACH: Sean Bennett, RB (D4-99). Bennett is a coachable player with some breakaway ability, but few scouts had him rated in the top 20 at his position.

BIGGEST BUST: Cedric Jones, DE (D1-96). He's shown flashes as an edge rusher, but he can't diagnose plays. His inability to fill Chad Bratzke's shoes in '99 was a big reason for Michael Strahan's disappointing season.

27 ATLANTA FALCONS

Considering its favorable first-round slots from 1995-98 (two of which were traded), Atlanta has badly misused its draft positions. Its most valuable picks have come in the middle rounds, where it has landed some solid starters.

BEST PICK: Keith Brooking, LB (D1-98). Brooking is an athletic linebacker with tremendous range who stepped in on the outside last season and showed signs he's ready to break out. He will move to the middle when Jessie Tuggle hangs 'em up.

WORST PICK: Ron Davis, CB (D2-95). With all the baggage he accumulated in college (Tennessee), he should never have been picked. A selection like this proves how far teams will go for a chance to get a fast cover corner.

BEST CLASS: '95. Davis aside, the Falcons hit on their other five picks. Trouble is, S Devin Bush (St. Louis) and LB Lorenzo Styles (St. Louis), DT John Burrough (Minnesota) and return specialist Roell Preston (Green Bay, San Francisco) have contributed to other teams. DT Travis Hall is the only player from this class still in Atlanta.

WORST CLASS: '96. The team traded its top pick for whiner QB Jeff George and its second-rounder for S Patrick Bates, a character problem. Its third selection, Alabama DT Shannon Brown, no longer is in the league. RB Richard Huntley has developed into a solid change-of-pace option to Jerome Bettis in Pittsburgh.

BEST VALUE: Tim Dwight, WR (D4b-98). Dwight's blazing speed helped him get a quick start as a rookie on kickoff returns. His ability to adapt that speed translated into bigger things on offense in '99.

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	6	6	6	9	9
Starters	1	0	0	4	0
Backups	0	0	1	4	6
Other team	4	3	1	0	0
Out of NFL	1	3	4	1	3

BIGGEST STEAL: Hall, DT (D6-95). Hall has emerged as one of the top 10 defensive tackles in the league and has compared favorably on tape with such players as John Randle, Luther Elliss and Warren Sapp.

BIGGEST REACH: Michael Booker, CB (D1-97). The Falcons were enamored with Booker's size (6-2, 200), but they might have overrated his man-to-man cover skills in the run-oriented Big 12 Conference.

BIGGEST BUST: Jammi German, WR (D3-98). He has the speed to be a true vertical threat, but his concentration and hands have stunted his development.

28 CAROLINA PANTHERS

It has been hit or miss for this franchise since its inception in 1995. Instability and deviating philosophies in the front office have set the team back in terms of depth, especially on defense.

BEST PICK: Muhsin Muhammad, WR (D2-96). Injuries and attitude problems plagued him during his first couple of years in the NFL, but Muhammad has emerged as one of the NFC's most dangerous receivers. He has ideal size (6-2, 217) and proved last season that he can hurt teams after the catch.

WORST PICK: Kerry Collins, QB (D1-95). That the organization didn't study his clearly questionable background before the draft is inexcusable. Collins' off-field problems were easily detectable while he was at Penn State, but the Panthers gambled on him anyway and lost—big time.

BEST CLASS: '98. This group included three average players on defense—DEs Jason Peter and Chuck Wiley and S Damien Richardson—and one potential deep threat in WR Donald Hayes.

WORST CLASS: '97. Except for S Mike Minter, the players from this class continue to struggle. WR Rae Carruth, the top pick, is a sad story, and LB Kinnon Tatum, DL Matt Finkes, and LB Tarek Saleh also are no longer with the club.

BEST VALUE: Chad Cota, S (D7-95) The team let him go as a restricted free agent after the '97 season and still hasn't found a ballhawk to replace him. Cota's contributions to the overall effectiveness of a defense are invaluable.

BOB LEVERONE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	11	10	6	8	5
Starters	1	2	1	1	1
Backups	0	0	1	6	2
Other team	4	3	2	0	0
Out of NFL	6	5	2	1	2

BIGGEST STEAL: Hayes, WR (D4-98). The Panthers were smart not to ignore Hayes' tremendous speed. He didn't get to prove himself in the run-oriented system at Wisconsin, but he's finally beginning to polish the finer points of his game.

BIGGEST REACH: Peter, DE (D1-98). Peter was tough, strong and nasty coming out of Nebraska, but he never had enough of the other skills to warrant such a high selection.

BIGGEST BUST: Carruth (D1-97). A productive, big-play receiver at Colorado, he was charged with murder last fall. This illustrates how difficult it is to fully investigate players during the draft process.

GRADE **D**

29 SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

Wasted picks ... first-round busts ... shortsighted trades. You name it, the Chargers have done it. If it weren't for some sound moves in free agency, this would be the least-talented team in the NFL.

BEST PICK: Freddie Jones, TE (D2-97). An athletic pass catcher, Jones has done nothing to disappoint since his selection. If his mental game ever matches his athleticism, he will be special.

WORST PICK: Bryan Still, WR (D2a-96). Still was an excellent vertical receiver at Virginia Tech, but his lack of feel for the game was apparent at the college level. He never had the heart or mind to compete in the NFL.

BEST CLASS: '97. Jones probably is the only player on San Diego's offense other teams covet. OLB Michael Hamilton, G Raleigh Roundtree and RB Kenny Bynum all contribute.

WORST CLASS: '98. The first-round selection of QB Ryan Leaf—the team traded its second-round pick in '98, its No. 1 pick in '99 and two players to move up one spot to draft him—created a three-ring circus. Among DE Cedric Harden, CB Clifford Ivory, LB Jon Haskins and WR Kio Sanford (all late-round picks), only Harden has a chance to help in 2000. Only WR Mikhael Ricks has made a difference.

BEST VALUE: Charlie Jones, WR (D4-96). The Chargers spotted this local product when he starred at Fresno State, and their ability to keep an eye on his progress paid off. Although he missed much of last season as a result of injury, Jones is one of the few Chargers capable of making a big play.

JOHN CORDES FOR TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	13	8	8	6	7
Starters	0	0	1	1	1
Backups	2	1	3	3	5
Other team	0	1	1	1	1
Out of NFL	11	6	3	1	0

BIGGEST STEAL: Roundtree, OT (D4-97). San Diego hasn't really "stolen" anyone in the last five years. Roundtree wins by default because at least he has started some games over the last three seasons.

BIGGEST REACH: Jermaine Fazande, FB (D2-99). Fazande flashed some potential as a rookie and might become a good player, but most teams had him pegged for the fifth round or later.

BIGGEST BUST: Leaf. The Colts helped make this decision when they chose Peyton Manning No. 1 overall in 1998. But unless Leaf matures and turns himself around soon, this pick will set the franchise back another decade.

GRADE **D-**

30 NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Former coach Mike Ditka's insistence on drafting tough overachievers really set this team back in terms of overall athleticism. The Saints have some nice players but very few playmakers.

BEST PICK: Mark Fields, LB (D1-95). Fields was an excellent athlete coming out of college but tended to get by solely on natural ability. He still plays a bit out of control, but he would have made the Pro Bowl last season had it not been for injuries.

WORST PICK: Chris Naeole, G (D1-97). This guy has all the skills, but few interior linemen are worthy of a top 10 selection. The Saints could have picked up help at a skill position and waited until the second round to address the offensive line.

BEST CLASS: '98. The team addressed two huge needs on offense, landing RT Kyle Turley with its first pick and TE Cam Cleeland in Round 2. Both have shown All-Pro potential in their first two seasons. CB Fred Weary and LB Chris Bordano started last season, but neither would figure to have such a role on better teams. DE Julian Pittman and RB Wilmont Perry have stuck for two seasons.

WORST CLASS: '99. Ditka and G.M. Bill Kuharich sealed their fates in New Orleans when the move to acquire RB Ricky Williams didn't produce the promised results. Both men believed the team was only a franchise runner away from the playoffs, but last season's 3-13 mark indicated otherwise.

ROBERT SEALE / TSN

FIVE-YEAR TALLY

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total picks	7	10	7	8	1
Starters	1	1	2	3	1
Backups	0	2	4	2	0
Other team	0	1	0	1	0
Out of NFL	6	6	1	2	0

BEST VALUE: Cleeland (D2-98). At 6-4, 272, Cleeland gives the team a nice target in the middle of the field and presents difficult matchup problems for defenses.

BIGGEST STEAL: Keith Poole, WR (D4b-97). Although it's doubtful Poole will ever develop into a legitimate starter, he is a straight-line burner who can be effective out of the slot when he draws coverage from safeties.

BIGGEST REACH: Danny Wuerffel, QB (D4a-97). The former Heisman Trophy winner endeared himself to Ditka with his positive attitude and work ethic, but he is too mechanical and his lack of arm strength has been exposed in the NFL.

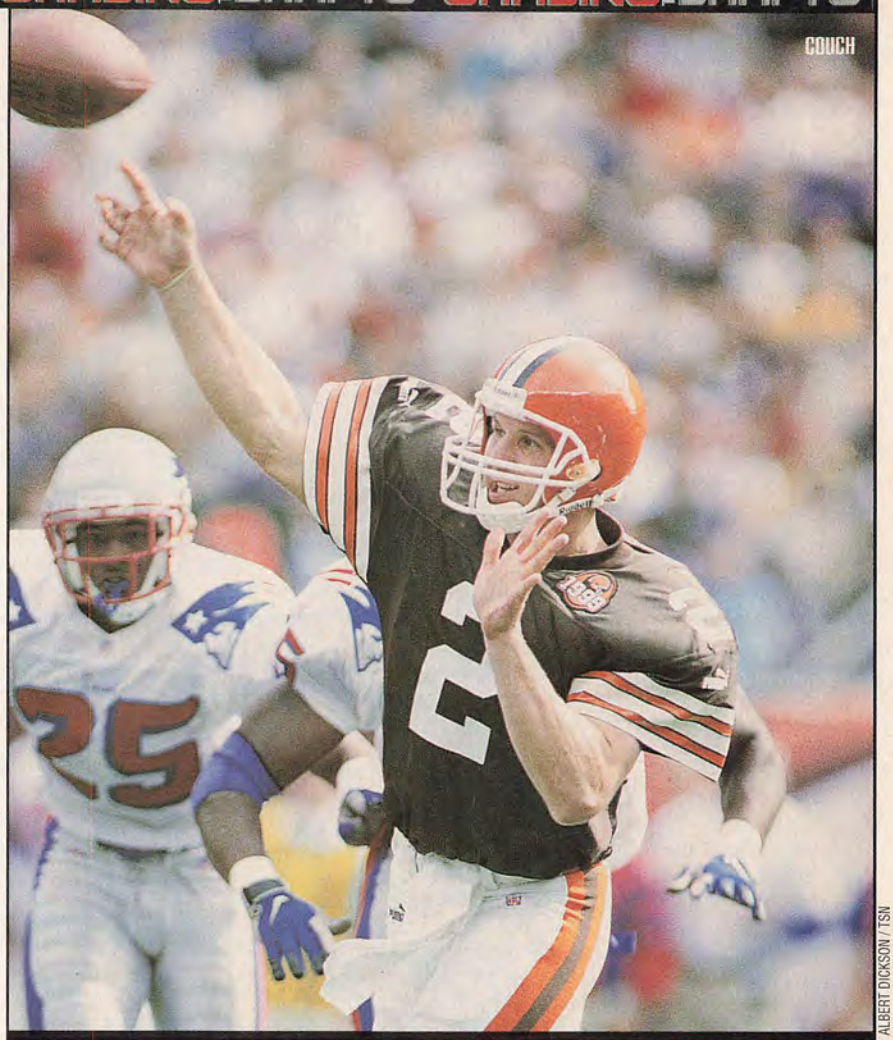
BIGGEST BUST: Alex Molden, CB (D1-96). Molden has the skills to be a shut-down corner, but his head doesn't always appear to be in the game.

GRADE **D-**

CLEVELAND BROWNS

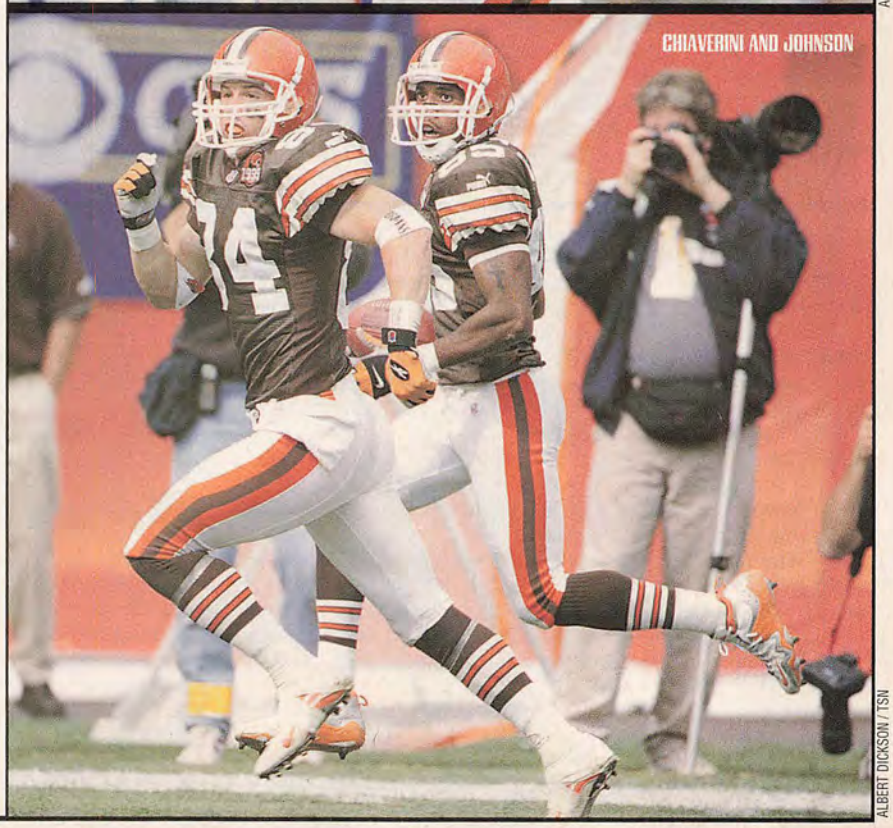
Team president Carmen Policy and general manager Dwight Clark, both former 49ers executives, get fairly high marks for their first season with the new Browns. It appears that they made the right decision in taking QB Tim Couch with the first overall selection in the draft. But the team better surround him with a better supporting cast if it plans on Couch making it through another season without going on injured reserve. Second-round pick Kevin Johnson surpassed expectations and developed nicely at wide receiver after limited time at that position in college. The Browns' other second-rounder, LB Rahim Abdullah, was productive on the outside and has a promising upside. Third-round CB Daylon McCutcheon held off competition from some quality veterans and started 15 games. He has excellent athletic ability and plays bigger than his size but probably fits in best as a nickel back. Hard-hitting SS Marquis Smith, another third-round pick, also received plenty of time in Cleveland's much-maligned secondary and could contend for a starting job in 2000. Fourth-round MLB Wali Rainer, who stepped up his game after an injury forced Chris Spielman to retire during the preseason, was the club's biggest steal. Rainer ranked among league leaders in tackles and fulfilled scouts' prophecies when he produced more than his athletic ability should allow. Darren Chiaverini (fifth round) could endear himself to the locals as the next Brian Brennan. Although he'll never be a star, Chiaverini is a nice complementary receiver who will keep the chains moving. DT Marcus Spriggs is exactly what the Browns thought they were getting—a project—when they took him in the sixth round out of Troy State. He's a big, athletic guy with potential who provides immediate depth in the defensive line. Maryland product Kendall Ogle (sixth) needs to add more strength to vie for time at linebacker, and his future figures to be on special teams. Sixth-round TE James Dearth was active for two games, but undrafted rookie Mark Campbell beat him out and got more snaps during the season. The final pick, RB Madre Hill, intrigued the Browns early on with his smarts and vision, but a knee injury ended his season. When he recovers, Hill could figure in as a third-down player in passing situations.

LAST YEAR'S TALLY	
Year	1995
Total picks	13
Starters	5
Backups	5
Other team	1
Out of NFL	2



COUCH

ALBERT DICKSON / TSN



CHIAVERINI AND JOHNSON

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The Sporting News DRAFT survey

"Yo, it's Fly. The boss wants to know what you think about pro football and this Draft Guide. Fly's talkin' about the inside scoop on the future NFL men of the gridiron from "The Bible of Sports." Tell The Sporting News what you think and you get a shot at some great stuff."

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND RETURN THIS SURVEY TO THE ADDRESS ON THE NEXT PAGE BY AUGUST 31, 2000, AND YOU'LL BE ENTERED IN A DRAWING FOR ONE OF FIVE FREE, ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE SPORTING NEWS OR ONE OF 25 COPIES OF THE SPORTING NEWS' ULTIMATE TRIVIA BOOK, "SO, YOU THINK YOU KNOW SPORTS."

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1. Which player should be selected first in the 2000 draft?
◇ Peter Warrick
◇ LaVar Arrington
◇ Courtney Brown

2. If your team has the No. 1 pick in the draft, do you generally prefer that it use the pick or trade down for more picks?
◇ Use it
◇ Trade down

3. What is the better way to build an NFL team today?
◇ Through the draft
◇ Through free agency

4. When should college players be allowed to enter the draft?
◇ After four college seasons
◇ After three college seasons
◇ Whenever they like

5. When rating draft prospects, how important is it for NFL teams to research a player's off-field behavior?
◇ Very important
◇ Somewhat important
◇ Not at all important

6. What is your primary reason for following the draft?
◇ I'm a college fan and I like to see what scouts think of players I've watched
◇ I'm an NFL fan and I like to see what scouts think of rookie prospects

7. How much of the draft do you watch live on television?
◇ All of it, both days
◇ All of day one
◇ First round only
◇ Check the running ticker periodically
◇ None of it

8. How much of the draft do you listen to live on radio?
◇ All of it
◇ Some of it
◇ None of it

9. How would you describe the level of your interest in the draft?
◇ I'd read stories about it every week of the year, if I could
◇ As soon as the NFL season ends, I'm ready to start absorbing draft information
◇ I start getting interested in April

10. Are you more interested in reading about draft prospects or the needs of individual NFL teams?
◇ Prospects
◇ NFL teams
◇ About the same interest

11. Where do you get most of your draft information?
◇ The Sporting News (this Draft Guide, weekly magazine, website, etc.)
◇ Other magazines
◇ Newspapers
◇ Television
◇ Radio
◇ Internet

12. Do you buy any other draft publications? (Check all that apply.)
◇ Mel Kiper's
◇ Ourlads'
◇ The Drugstore List
◇ Other (list)_____
_____

13. Do you plan to purchase TSN's Draft Guide again next year?
◇ Yes ◇ No

Please turn the page

14. Overall, how would you rate this Draft Guide?
◇ Excellent
◇ Very good
◇ Good
◇ Average
◇ Below average

15. If we could devote more or less space to certain sections (without changing the overall number of pages), how would you like to see that space used?

More pages	Fewer pages	Perfect as is	
_____	_____	_____	Feature articles on players
_____	_____	_____	Feature articles on other draft-related topics
_____	_____	_____	Player bios
_____	_____	_____	Team outlooks
_____	_____	_____	Team histories

16. What would you like to see in future editions that was missing this year?_____
_____

17. What factors influenced you to buy TSN's Draft Guide? (Check all that apply.)
◇ Overall editorial content
◇ Graphic presentation
◇ Cover
◇ Price
◇ Name recognition

18. Before the draft, how often did you refer to TSN's Draft Guide?
◇ Every week
◇ Every day
◇ Constantly

19. Did you refer to the Draft Guide during the draft?
◇ Yes ◇ No

20. Did you refer to the Draft Guide after the draft?
◇ Yes ◇ No

21. Did you buy TSN's 1999 Draft Guide?
◇ Yes ◇ No

21a. If yes, how long did you keep it?
◇ Until the draft was over
◇ Until the season began
◇ Throughout the season
◇ I'll always have it

22. How many other people read your copy of TSN's Draft Guide?
◇ 0 ◇ 1 ◇ 2
◇ 3 ◇ 4-5 ◇ 6-10
◇ 11-15 ◇ More than 15

23. Besides the Draft Guide, have you read a yearbook from The Sporting News before?
◇ Yes ◇ No

23a. If yes, which ones? (Check all that apply.)
◇ Pro football
◇ College football
◇ Fantasy football
◇ Baseball
◇ Fantasy baseball
◇ Pro basketball
◇ College basketball
◇ Hockey
◇ Racing

24. If it were possible to order all or some of The Sporting News yearbooks as a package and have them delivered to you by mail, would you be interested?
◇ Yes ◇ No

25. Do you read The Sporting News weekly magazine?
◇ Yes ◇ No

26. Have you ever seen or used The Sporting News website (sportingnews.com)?
◇ Yes ◇ No

27. How many pro football games do you attend in a season?
◇ 0 ◇ 1-3 ◇ 4-6
◇ 7-10 ◇ More than 10

28. Is your favorite team in any of the four professional sports outside your local market?
◇ Yes ◇ No

29. Have you ever traveled to attend a sporting event outside your local market?
◇ Yes ◇ No

30. Do you wear merchandise featuring your teams' logos?
◇ Yes ◇ No

31. Would you be interested in purchasing a jersey or other merchandise related to your team's top draft pick?
◇ Yes ◇ No

32. Have you purchased Timberland footwear in the last year?
◇ Yes ◇ No

33. Which credit card do you prefer using?
◇ Visa
◇ MasterCard
◇ American Express
◇ Discover
◇ Other _____

34. Please check the category that includes your age.
◇ Under 18 ◇ 18-24
◇ 25-29 ◇ 30-34
◇ 35-44 ◇ 45-54
◇ 55-64 ◇ Over 64

35. Are you...
◇ Male? ◇ Female?

36. Are you...
◇ Married? ◇ Single?

37. Did you attend or graduate from college?
◇ Yes ◇ No

38. Which of the following categories contains your approximate total household income, before taxes, for 1999? (Please include total earnings for all members of your household from all sources.)
◇ Under $20,000
◇ $20,000-$29,999
◇ $30,000-$39,999
◇ $40,000-$49,999
◇ $50,000-$74,999
◇ $75,000-$99,999
◇ $100,000-$199,999
◇ Over $200,000

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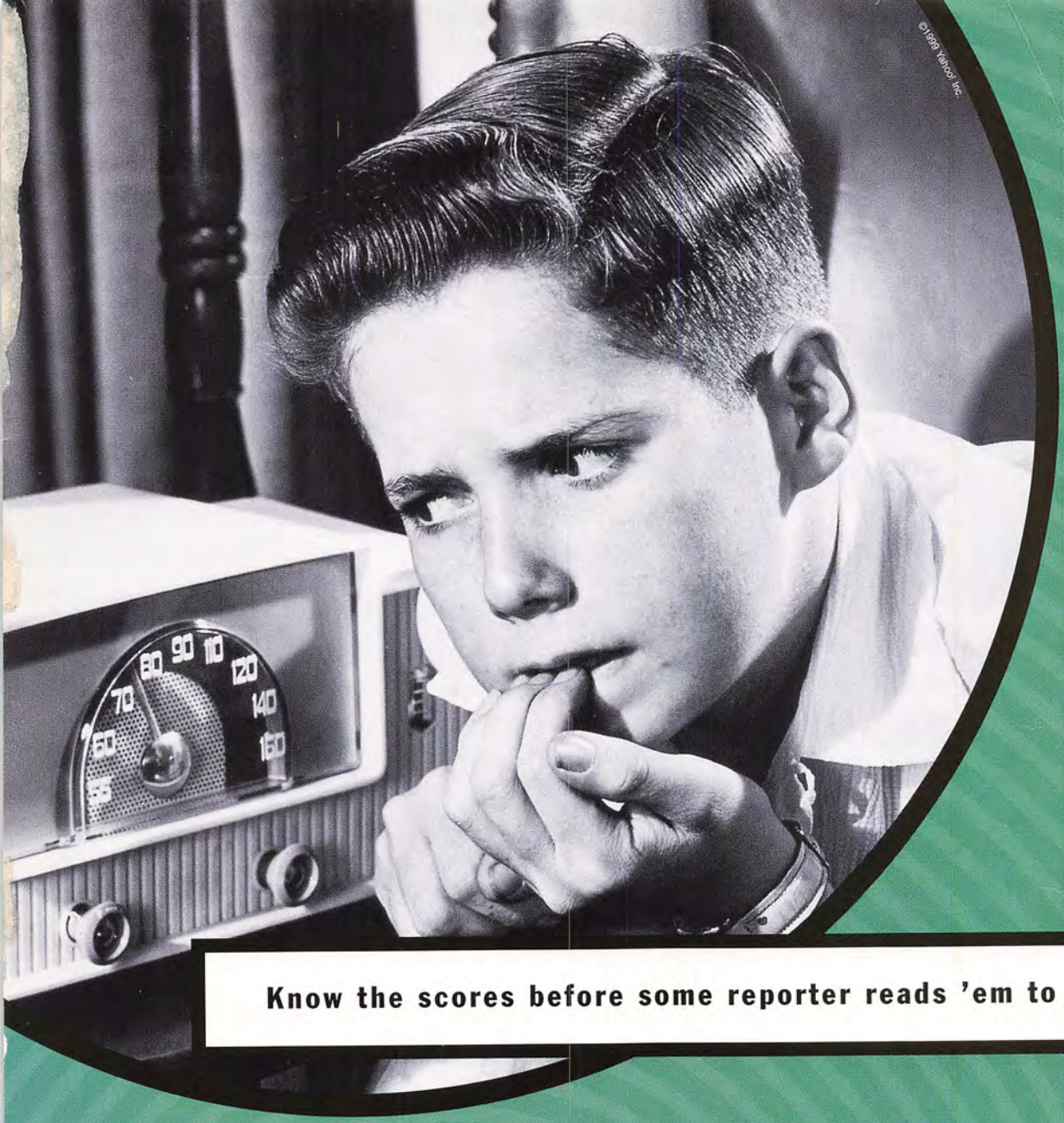

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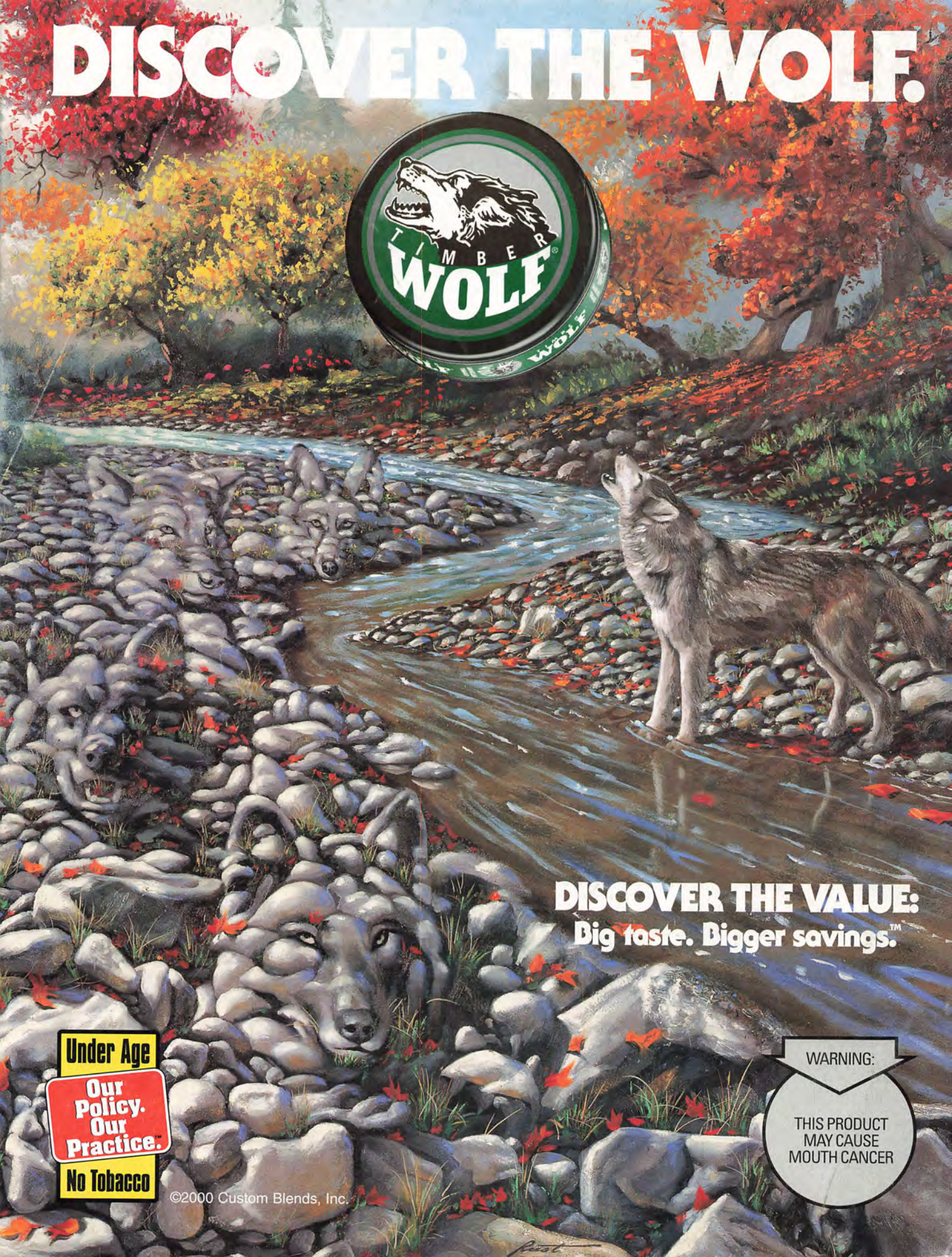
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